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THOMAS DAY ESQ.^R

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[Keir, James]

A N

A C C O U N T

O F T H E

L I F E A N D W R I T I N G S

O F

T H O M A S D A Y, E S Q.

Non ille regno fervit, aut regno imminens
Vanos honores sequitur, aut fluxas opes,
Spei metûsque liber.

SENEC. HIPPOL.

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To Mrs. D A Y.

MADAM,

I CANNOT dedicate the following account of my late excellent friend to any person with so much propriety as to yourself, who formed, during many years, the dearest interest of his life, and contributed most essentially to his happiness. Neither can any other person judge so well with what fidelity I have delineated his character, or what justice I have done to those talents and virtues, of which you continue to cherish and venerate the remembrance.

I am, with the greatest regard,

MADAM,

Your faithful obedient Servant,

JAMES KEIR.

AN
A C C O U N T
OF THE
L I F E, &c.

THE history, opinions, and even the domestic habits of men celebrated for their literary talents, have ever excited public curiosity. For when our minds are amused, our taste gratified, our knowledge extended, or our passions engaged by their excellent compositions; when we meet with conclusions or remarks which seem to result from premises acknowledged by ourselves, but which however we had never inferred; and more particularly when the generous sentiments flowing warm from the heart of the writer shed their sympathetic influence on our own bosoms; we form, as it were, an ac-

B

quaintance

quaintance with the mind of the author, and naturally enough wish to increase the intimacy, by informing ourselves of the events of his life, his opinions, habits, and manners. Hence arises the avidity with which we read the lives of interesting authors : nor are we even diverted from this pleasure by the display of follies and weaknesses, real or supposed, which late biographers, and anecdote-writers have perhaps too studiously exhibited; as if they meant to gratify the envy of little minds with some consolation, for their intellectual inferiority, by lessening our admiration of men whom we would wish to consider as ornaments to our nature. (a)*

But if we can view with pleasure portraits, even when disfigured by some humiliating features; with what interest and affection must we contemplate one, in which to the brilliancy of genius and talent are added the virtues and amiable qualities of the heart, exerting themselves through life with an extraordinary and

* See the Notes subjoined at the end.

systematic energy, and maintaining an uniform and exemplary dignity of character.⁹ For the public regard is due to the character of Mr. Day, not only on account of his literary talents; but it will be given more willingly, when it is remembered that these talents were employed, not ostentatiously for his personal ambition, but strenuously in the cause of humanity, freedom, and virtue; and still more when it is known, that his fortune also, which was ample, was so devoted to the service of his fellow creatures, that he seemed to have considered himself the steward of his possessions, in trust for the exercise of generosity and relief of misery, rather than as the inheritor for his own gratification.

It appears then to be a duty incumbent on those to whom his worth was known, to blend with their private tears for his untimely death, some sketch, for the public instruction and example, of the life of one, who, by the extension and activity of his philanthropy, seemed to belong not merely to his circle of friends, but to the whole human species.

Those readers however who search for variety of incident and poignancy of anecdote, may be disappointed here. For the private station and retirement, which he could not be induced to relinquish, afford little scope for this kind of entertainment; and the recentness of his death, together with the decorum due to the living, may preclude anecdotes in which his survivors may be concerned. Nevertheless the contemplation of a character, distinguished for genius and virtue, will not be deemed uninteresting to other readers of a better taste,

Whose eye refined
Can see the greatness of an honest mind,
Can see each virtue and each "muse" unite,
And taste the raptures of a pure delight.*

Thomas Day was born in London on the 22d day of June, in the year 1748. His parents were *Thomas Day, Esq.* who enjoyed a considerable office in the Customs,† and *Jane* his wife,

* Dr. Browne's Essay on Satire.

† Collector of Customs outwards; a place held by the late Duke of Manchester.

the daughter of *Samuel Bonham, Esq.* When he was thirteen months old, his father died: and accordingly the care of his education, and the honour of having so well succeeded in it, devolved to his mother, who, principally for the sake of her son's health, removed to Stoke-Newington. At this place he was put to a child's school; and when of proper age, he was sent to the Charter-house, where he received the rudiments of his education under a master well known for ability and discipline, *Dr. Crusius*. Having remained eight or nine years at this school, he was removed at the age of sixteen to *Oxford*, and entered as a gentleman-commoner at *Corpus Christi College*.

Of what progress he made in his studies the best testimonies are to be found in his works. Not intending to advance himself in any profession, he thought it unnecessary to take any of the usual degrees of the University; and, for the same reason, he was less solicitous to qualify himself for the display of talents, usually the principal scope of education, than to attain mo-

ral truths and exemplary facts, by which he was to enlighten his mind and guide his future life. Accordingly a gentleman who had been a school-fellow of his relates, that his themes and verses were less conspicuous for elegance of language than for ingenuity and solidity of matter. And although his works sufficiently shew that he afterwards added the graces to the force of composition, it is probable that he might have been led thereto, not only by his improving taste, but also by the consideration, that in order to produce the greatest effect in any literary conflict, even in the best cause, in this fastidious age, it is necessary to use arms which are not only pointed and strong, but also polished and splendid. It is certain however that ornament was but a secondary consideration, and that the main object of his academical pursuits was the discovery of moral truths, which he investigated with the severity of logical induction and the depth of metaphysical research.

The result of all his inquiries was, that virtue was the true interest of man, and he therefore

fore determined to pursue it as his most substantial good.

This opinion and resolution were farther fostered and matured in his mind by reading the antient classics, in which the image of virtue there delineated makes an impression so deep on the sensible minds of youth, that it is never afterwards effaced. Let us recollect the first movements which we received from reading the institutions of *Lycurgus*, infusing a contempt of wealth, ease, and pleasure, and devoting these and life itself to the public good; from the pictures of heroism and magnanimity drawn by the animated pencils of the ancient *historians* and *poets*; from the happily imagined fictions of *Plato* and *Xenophon*, which our weakness supposes incapable of being realized; from the divine conversations of *Socrates*; and from the works and doctrines of the *philosophers*, particularly of that sect,* which, whatever may be thought of their metaphysical notions, did cer-

* The Stoics.

tainly in their actions and rules relative to conduct maintain more than any other the dignity of human nature; a sect, whose principles could ennoble the slave *Epietetus*, and render him more truly free than his tyrannic master; and which could induce several *Emperors* to descend from the splendor of their thrones, into the utmost simplicity and purity of manners; while they maintained the dignity of their diadems merely by the strict discharge of the duties annexed to their station, and by the unremitting practice of the severest virtue.

As *Alexander* is said to have been struck with a passion for glory at the sight of the tomb of *Achilles*, and there to have formed the resolution of becoming a conquering hero; so our youthful student may be conceived to have formed the better determination of devoting himself, his passions, pleasures, fortune and talents, to virtue, by contemplating these venerable shrines, where all that remains of the wisdom and worth of antiquity is deposited.

It must certainly seem a very singular phenomenon, that a youth just entered into the age of passions, in the vigour of health and spirits, in the affluence of fortune, and in *this* age, should dedicate his time, thoughts, and studies, to form in his mind the principles of action, by which he was ever afterwards to regulate his conduct. And it will appear still more extraordinary, when it is known, that during his whole future life, the principles and resolutions, which he had adopted at this early age, were the invariable rule by which all his actions were governed, with an uniformity and consistency seldom maintained through different periods of life, and from which he was not diverted by the dread of ridicule, so powerful over young minds, by the impulse of passions, by the false glare of ambition, by the allurements of pleasure, nor by the assimilating manners of the age.

This consistency of principle with conduct, continued through his whole life, is a characteristic feature by which Mr. Day was distinguished. The characters of most men are form-

ed by flow degrees, and undergo various changes, before they settle into habit. Boys receive from their masters, or more frequently from their school-fellows, their earliest flexures; and then upon entering into the world, take directions from those whom fortune presents to their unexperienced minds as patterns for imitation. Reflection, the constant follower of disappointment, afterwards takes its turn, and sometimes in vigorous shoots re-establishes their upright position. The greater simplicity and consistency of Mr. Day's character shew its superior strength.

I have mentioned the *opinions* and *principles*, which he formed to himself as the rule of his actions. But opinions and principles do not constitute the whole of the character. They seem to be the direct cause of our actions; and may be considered as the plants, or perhaps only as the branches which immediately produce the flowers and the fruits; but they are ineffectual in themselves, and must be grafted on the parent stock of our *natural dispositions*, upon the
greater

greater or less hardiness and strength of which depends the diversity in the vigour of the tree, and in the excellence of the fruit.

Opinion then, and *natural disposition*, constitute the sum of *character*, or the assemblage of a man's principles, manners, and habits. As the natural disposition forms the principal part of character, so it is the most deserving to be understood; but it is also the most difficult to be investigated. Nevertheless slight incidents, especially in the simplicity of childhood, sometimes lay open at once more of the genuine temper, than the acutest moralist can discover in maturer age. A very ingenious and discerning gentleman, who had been a school-fellow with Mr. Day, relates an event of this nature, which struck him as being characteristic. In a boxing match between young Day and another little champion, the former discovering that his antagonist was unequal to the conflict, and that he maintained it only through excess of spirit and shame of defeat, stopped the fight of his own accord, made his adversary an offer of conciliation

ciliation and friendship, and praised him for the courage which he had displayed. Who does not see in this little event a cool fortitude, a humane and forgiving temper, and a magnanimity which relinquished its own triumph to spare the shame of a brave adversary? (b)

Such were the dispositions which he inherited from nature, and which might perhaps be farther resolved into two qualities, of which one is a large portion of *sympathy*, or that power of the imagination which transposes into our own breasts the misery or happiness of others, with the consequent desire to prevent the former, and to promote the latter; and the other is an uncommon degree of *constitutional firmness* or *fortitude*; accompanied with a consciousness of our own strength which puts aside the little passions arising from selfish timidity, gives us the command of ourselves so that we may be enabled to subdue a present impulse for a distant but greater good, and allows an undisturbed scope for the operation of the former quality, *sympathy*, the
true

true source of all virtuous inclination. By the union then of these two qualities a character is constituted, at once desirous of the happiness of others, and able to controul its own passions in order to effect that object, or whatever reason shall indicate as the most worthy of pursuit.

His tenderness and sensibility on one hand, and his fortitude on the other, were both possessed by him in a remarkable degree. It is probable, that, as all men are born with the same external form or parts, varied only by different proportions, so the same qualities of the mind, or at least the principles whence those qualities result, do likewise exist in all; and that the differences, observable in the natural characters or dispositions of men, do not depend upon any variations of the kind, but only on the degree or intensity of these qualities and principles, and especially on the adjustment of their proportions to each other. Thus, for instance, a certain degree of sympathy in one person of a feeble character may operate so powerfully, as to
prevent

prevent even the exertions necessary for its own gratification ; while a much higher degree of the same principle may, by being united with a proportionable degree of fortitude, become the source of an uniform, active, enlightened, and systematic benevolence, and may become the genius which inspires a *Day* or a *Howard*.

Sensibility and *fortitude* are sometimes, but improperly, considered as qualities of a contrary nature ; and it may to some appear difficult to conceive that they should both exist, in an eminent degree, in the same person. It is nevertheless certain, that they do not destroy or counteract, but only regulate the operation of each other : they do not resemble certain powerful chemical substances, which being opposite in quality lose their peculiar energies, by uniting together, and become one inactive or neutralized mass ; but they may be compared more aptly to the two forces by which the planets are revolved in their orbits, the *progressive* constantly impelling them in a direct line into the boundless regions of space, and the *attractive* as uniformly drawing them

them towards the center of gravity of the system, each of them regulating but not destroying the power of the other ; while both conspire, by their joint efforts, to describe those admirable ellipses, and to produce that regular variety and harmony of motion round the sun, on which depend the prosperity of these bodies, and their aptitude for the ends of their Creator.

Nothing is more easy than to trace Mr. Day's character in his own writings : for no man better deserved the eulogy which Quintilian gives of the younger Brutus, "*Scias eum sentire quæ dicit.*" Thus, for instance, the representation which he gives of the affectionate, friendly, brave, and generous little hero, *Sandford*,* is the transcript of the author's mind. His resemblance, at a more advanced age, is also very truly drawn in the third volume of the same work, under the character of *Sophon*.

* In the History of Sandford and Merton, by Mr. Day.

That much of Mr. Day's constitutional character was derived from his mother, appears clearly to those who know the singular strength of mind of that venerable lady, to whose steady and judicious management of him in his infancy, as well as to her exemplary conduct in life, he was also indebted for his earliest good impressions, and for the first bias and direction of his mind to honourable pursuits. A small anecdote will shew how much of his fortitude he may have inherited from this parent :—

When she was yet a young unmarried woman, while she was walking in company with another young lady through a field, a bull came running up to them with all the marks of malevolence. Her friend began to run towards the stile, but was prevented by Miss *Bonham* (the maiden name of Mr. Day's mother) who told her, that as she could not reach the stile soon enough to save herself, and as it is the nature of these animals to attack persons in flight, her life would be in great danger if she attempted to run, and would be inevitably lost if she chanced to fall ; but that if she would steal gently to the stile,

she

She herself would take off the bull's attention from her, by standing between them. Accordingly turning her face towards the animal with the firmest aspect she could assume, she fixed her eyes steadily upon his. It is said by travellers, that a lion itself may be controuled by the steady look of a human being, but that no sooner a man turns his back, than the beast springs upon him as his prey. Miss Bonham, to whom this property of animals seems to have been known, had the presence of mind to apply it to the safety of her friend and of herself. By her steady aspect she checked the bull's career; but he shewed the strongest marks of indignation at being so controuled, by roaring and tearing the ground with his feet and horns. While he was thus engaged in venting his rage on the turf, she cautiously retreated a few steps, without removing her eyes from him. When he observed that she had retreated, he advanced till she stopped, and then he also stopped, and again renewed his frantic play. Thus by repeated degrees she at length arrived at the stile, where she accomplished her safety; and thus,

by a presence of mind rarely seen in a person of her youth and sex, she not only saved herself, but also, at the hazard of her own life, protected her friend. Some days afterwards, this bull gored its master.—This excellent lady, whose name is *Mrs. Phillips*, (having been married, some years after the death of her first husband, to Thomas Phillips, Esq. of Barehill, in Berkshire, where she now resides) having twice suffered the calamity of widowhood ; but being still possessed of one solid comfort, an only and beloved son, who reflected every virtue he had derived from his parent, and cast a glory round her setting sun, was, at the age of seventy, deprived at once of this last and only consolation by a severe stroke of fate, rendered still more awful by the violence of the manner and the suddenness of the event. What a trial for fortitude ! Yet such alone could prove the full extent of hers. The writer of these pages was a witness of, and never can forget, the dignity of her grief, which brought fully into his mind whatever has been told of the magnanimity of Roman and Spartan Matrons ; and the generous sensibility

with

with which she strove to suppress her own sorrows, the better to enable her to moderate the too poignant anguish of her daughter-in-law. Such then is the mother of Mr. Day ! We can be at no loss to trace the source of those natural dispositions which he possessed in an extraordinary degree ; of that *courage* and *fortitude*, which yielded to no events, and of that *disinterested generosity* which preferred the happiness of others to his own gratification.

Such were the prevalent *dispositions* which he inherited from nature ; such were the *principles* and *opinions* which he adopted ; and such were the *resolutions* which he had formed in his early youth, which were expanded through life, and which he carried to the grave, namely, to *regulate his actions by reason and virtue* ;

Patriæque impendere vitam ;

Non sibi, sed toti genitum se credere mundo.

Not for *himself* as born, but for *mankind* ;

To *live* for Britain, or to *die* resigned.

By means of the above sketch of Mr. Day's *character*, it will not be difficult to trace the connection between that and his *conduct* in the remaining part of his life, and to observe how the latter flowed from the former; a connexion so necessary to be observed and indicated in biography, though often omitted, that without it the detail of the actions of a man's life resembles the scattered fragments of a ruin, from which we cannot trace the original plan or design of the building, rather than the adjusted parts of a regular edifice.

Although Mr. Day never deviated from the principles which he had fixed alike in his judgment and in his affections, it may easily be conceived that his advancing experience might alter his opinions respecting the propriety and efficacy of the means to be employed in the accomplishment of his resolutions. Thus many plausible, though somewhat romantic schemes, which had captivated his young imagination, were laid aside in his maturer years. Perhaps we may smile at the Quixotism of virtue in young Day, who,

who, at the age of seventeen, having heard that a certain nobleman, celebrated only for having made female seduction the business of his life, had, in a late instance, abandoned one of his wretched victims to all the horrors of vice and unpitied penury, wrote a letter to his lordship, remonstrating with him on the complicated villainy and meanness of his conduct, and concluded by offering a personal challenge, unless by relieving her from want, he should give her an opportunity of flying from vice, which his cruelty had taught her was inseparable from misery. We may perhaps smile, I say, at this overflowing of virtue; but it is a glorious excess; and we may be assured, that where virtue never overflows, in youth especially, it will seldom rise to its due level.

Mr. Day indeed retained, during all the periods of his life, as might be expected from his character, a strong detestation of female seduction. Several years afterwards happening to see some verses written by a young lady on a recent event of this nature, which was succeeded

by a fatal catastrophe; the unhappy young woman who had been victim to the perfidy of a lover, overpowered by her sensibility of shame, having died of a broken heart; he addressed the fair poetess, with whose sentiments he sympathized, in the following lines:

T O T H E
A U T H O R E S S
O F

“ VERSES to be inscribed on DELIA's Tomb.”

SWEET Poetess, whose gentle numbers flow
With all the artless energy of woe!

The choicest wreath, oh lovely maid! be thine,
Which pity offers at the Muse's shrine.

Were there a strain of pow'r to soothe the care

Of bitt'rest anguish, and assuage despair,

Thy gen'rous verse might ev'ry bosom cheer,

And wipe from ev'ry eye the falling tear!

But there are transports of the secret soul,

Which not the Muses sacred charms controul:

When ruin'd innocence, condemn'd to bleed,

Mourns the remembrance of the fatal deed:

While

While stern contempt attends, and public hate,
 And shame remorseless points the dart of fate,
 Yet shall thy votive wreath unfading bloom,
 A grateful off'ring to thy Delia's tomb.
 There, while celestial mercy beams confest,
 And soothes the mourner to eternal rest,
 Be fancy's mildest softest visions seen,
 And forms aerial glitter o'er the green !
 Such forms as oft, by bow'rs and haunted streams,
 Descend mysterious on the poet's dreams !
 There, borne by hov'ring zephyrs thro' the air,
 Returning spring shall wave her dewy hair,
 While Flora, mistress of the milder year,
 Marks ev'ry flow'r she scatters with a tear.
 There, when the gloom of midnight fills the plains,
 The sacred guardians of immortal strains,
 To ev'ry blast shall bid their tresses flow,
 And pour the sweet majestic sounds of woe !
 Lives there a virgin in the secret shade
 Not yet to shame by perjur'd man betray'd ?
 This sacred spot instructed let her tread,
 And bend in silent anguish o'er the dead !
 She once, like thee, to hope's gay visions born,
 Shone like the lustre of the dewy morn.
 One hour of guilt, one fatal hour is o'er,
 Lo, youth, and hope, and beauty are no more !
 Go now in mirth the fleeting hours employ,
 Go snatch the flow'rs of transitory joy !

Let feast and revelry prolong the night,
 The lyre transport thee, and the dance delight;
 Yet be one pause of sad reflection given,
 To the low voice of Delia and of Heav'n!
 That voice which rises from her dreary tomb,
 And calls thee to its solitary doom,
 Dims ev'ry taper, palls the mantling wine,
 And blasts the wreath which love and pleasure twine!
 And thou, oh youth! whom meditation leads
 With pensive step along these glist'ning meads,
 If yet thy bosom, unseduc'd and pure,
 Ne'er worship'd fortune's shrine or pleasure's lure;
 If at the tale of innocence oppress'd,
 Strong indignation struggle in thy breast;
 If in thy constant soul soft pity glow,
 And foes to virtue be thy only foe,
 Approach this spot, and mark with pitying eyes,
 How low the young, the fair, the gentle lies!
 Be the stern virtue of thy soul resign'd,
 Let gushing tears attest thy yielding mind!
 Swear by the dread avengers of the tomb,
 By all thy hopes, by death's tremendous gloom!
 That ne'er by thee deceiv'd, the tender maid
 Shall mourn her easy confidence betray'd;
 Nor weep in secret thy triumphant art,
 With bitter anguish rankling in her heart.
 So may each blessing which impartial fate
 Throws on the good, but snatches from the great,

Adorn

hours

Adorn thy favour'd course with rays divine,
And Heav'n's best gift, a virtuous love, be thine !

A youthful and active mind thus inflamed with the enthusiasm of virtue, but undirected by the wisdom which experience alone can give, could not avoid falling into some of those delusions which have been created by heated imagination,^v or by the sophistry of hypocrites. It is no wonder then, that at this period he was led, like many others, by the seductive eloquence of *Rousseau*, into worlds of fancy respecting education. According to the notions of this celebrated writer, society is an unnatural state in which all the genuine worth of the human species is perverted ; and he therefore recommends that children should be educated apart from the world, in order that their minds may be kept untainted with and ignorant of its vices, prejudices, and artificial manners. Nothing surely can be more absurd than the principle of this plan of education, or more impracticable in execution ; for society is not only
.. natu-

natural to man, but also necessary, if not for his existence, yet certainly for the attainment and perfection of those qualities which give him the pre-eminence over all other animals, and which are the principal subjects of comparative excellence among men. An education therefore which has not society in view must be defective, not only in that instruction which ought to explain our duties and relations, but also in the acquisition of the most important habits, particularly that of controuling our selfish impulses for the sake of general order and happiness. Nevertheless *Roussseau* has so artfully interwoven with his wild system many just and ingenious remarks, that although they have been found to be chiefly borrowed from *Montaigne* and *Locke*, they not only seem by their connection to have the merit of originality, but they also throw upon his whole assemblage of opinions on this subject a speciousness, which unguarded minds may easily take for the light of truth; whereas it is in fact but an ignis fatuus of the fancy, fanned by the breath of an eloquence peculiarly persuasive.

These notions which in others only tended to amuse, or which at least were soon dissipated by the interests of social life, did however sink deep into Mr. Day's young and sensible mind, a soil where no seed fell unproductive; and began to expand into schemes, which, on account of the impracticability of their execution, were sometimes the subject of his own pleasantry in his maturer age. The most singular of these projects was an experiment on female education, in which he proposed to unite the purity of female virtue with the fortitude and hardiness of constitution of a Spartan virgin, and with a simplicity of taste that should despise the frivolous vanities, the effeminate manners, and the dissipated pleasures, which, according to *Rousseau's* declamation, constitute the female character of the present age. With this view he received into his guardianship two female children, whom he intended to educate himself according to his preconceived system. And he actually proceeded, during some years, in the execution of this project. The experience, which had at first been wanting

to

to him, at length gave him convincing proofs of the impracticability of this mode of education, while his acquired knowledge of mankind suggested doubts of its expediency. Finding himself obliged to relinquish his project of forming *Rousseau's* children of nature in the center of England, he nevertheless continued these children under his protection (c) and maintenance, and gave them such education as this kingdom affords. It is not improbable, that at the time when Mr. Day undertook to educate, according to his own ideas, these two female children, being himself but young, he might entertain some expectation of marrying one of them. But when he had relinquished that scheme, and had delivered them up, while they were yet children, to a boarding school, they were then no longer *children of nature*, but of *the world*, and they could retain none of the specific differences which distinguished them from others, and on which any expectations, that he might have originally formed, could have been grounded.

Here

Here we cannot avoid remarking the contrast in the conduct of *Mr. Day* and of *Rousseau*, although the former had been inclined to think favourably of the writings of the latter on the subject of education. *Mr. Day* received two orphans under his protection; while the celebrated philosopher of Switzerland placed five of his own children in a foundling hospital at Paris.

While *Mr. Day* was thus following, according to his own expression, (*d*) “the extravagancies of a warm heart, and of a strong imagination,” he became acquainted with a gentleman of very uncommon merit, who being by the singular accuracy of his ideas and of his knowledge of men and things peculiarly adapted to correct the romantic bias of a youthful imagination, had certainly, during the intimacy and friendship which gradually took place between them, great influence on his opinions. This gentleman was *Dr. William Small*, a physician in Birmingham, who, to the most extensive, va-

rious,

rious, and accurate knowledge, in the sciences, in literature, and in life, joined engaging manners, a most exact conduct, a liberality of sentiment, and an enlightened humanity. Being a great master in the exact sciences, he seemed to carry their regularity and precision into his reasonings and opinions on all other subjects. This correctness of judgement placed *Dr. Small* as the very antipode of *Rousséau*, by whom all objects were seen through a medium of enthusiasm, which disturbed their forms and falsified their colours with some prismatic tinge. On the other hand, *Dr. Small* leant perhaps somewhat to the opposite extreme, and too strictly analysed human affairs ; so that although they were reflected by his mind with the most perfect and exact outlines, the pictures were too void of colour. *Nil admirari* was his favourite motto; which however he afterwards, as his health and spirits declined, changed to one of a darker cast, *μη φυναι*, the two first words of a line of Euripedes, expressing that it would have been better not to have been born. Mr. Day had, indeed, at this early period
of

of his life, enthusiasm to spare; and Dr. Small thought he could not do his younger friend more service than by controuling his imagination and correcting his views; although it may be considered still as a problem, not very easy of solution, to determine what portion of a virtuous enthusiasm may be extinguished with benefit to mankind. For although our exertions may not equal our wishes or expectations; yet probably we shall not attain the greatest height at which we are capable of arriving, unless we aim at a still higher quarry. The eagle can never reach the sun, yet by the boldness of the attempt he may acquire a strength of flight peculiar to himself. On the other hand, too much divested of enthusiasm, Dr. Small, although possessed of various and eminent talents to instruct mankind, has left no trace behind of all that store of knowledge and observation which he had acquired, and from which his friends never left him without drawing fresh information. He lives only in the memory of those friends who knew his worth,

worth, and of the poor, whom his humane skill was ever ready to rescue from disease and pain. (e)

Mr. Day, in his youth, was fond of seeing men and manners, but not being dazzled by those of the higher ranks, sometimes exclusively called “the world,” and perceiving that a knowledge of human nature was better to be learnt from the lower orders, where it appears less disguised by art; he used to take long journies through different parts of England and Wales on foot, sometimes in company, and frequently alone, mixing with people of all descriptions; sometimes going into the parlour of an inn, and at other times into the kitchen, where he generally found most of the amusement and instruction that he was in search of, and where he was much diverted with the embarrassment he occasioned to know who and what he was. Possessed of much strength and activity of body, a flow of animal spirits, a relish for youthful frolic, and a vein of humour and pleasantry,

pleasantry, he greatly enjoyed these excursions: while at the same time, he acquired an exact knowledge of the modes of thinking and expression, habits, and manners of the farmers and other more uncultivated classes of men, to whom he could, in his future life, easily adapt himself, and whom he ever treated with kindness and condescension, rather as less fortunate brothers of the same family, than as beings of a different and inferior order, as they seem too often to be considered by men who confound the accidental advantages of fortune with personal excellence. He likewise visited *Ireland* in company with a very intimate friend Mr. Edgworth, and passed some time at this gentleman's seat Edgworth's-town in that kingdom. He wished also to travel abroad; but as his guardians did not seem willing to give their consent, he resided principally at *Lichfield*, attracted by the very cultivated society in that city, until he became of age and consequently master of his own actions. He then chose to pass some years abroad, returning at intervals to see his friends. Accordingly he spent one winter at *Paris*, another at *Avignon*, a third

at *Lyons*; one summer in the *Austrian Netherlands*, and another in *Holland*. The different manners of men in different countries, and the various forms of political and civil society, were subjects which at all times engaged his attention. During his residence at the University, his mind had been wholly occupied by his studies: and having also conceived some contempt for the modern refinements, he had taken no pains whatever to improve his external appearance and manner; so that, however valuable the diamond might be within, every person had not sufficient knowledge immediately to discern it. Conscious of this defect, and sensible that however he might himself disregard exterior accomplishment, unless he possessed it, he would not be permitted, without imputation of envy, to attack by reasoning or by ridicule the affectation or excess of it, he applied himself with the same perseverance, with which he executed all his purposes, while he was in France, to sacrifice to the graces; and with an assiduity, as if he had really been enamoured with them. It may be easily imagined, that when he had shewn that he

was

was not unequal to external accomplishments, he would gradually give way to his original contempt of dress and appearance, although no man continued more observant of all the minuter attentions of essential civility and politeness independent of forms. Besides, his observation of the distresses too often incurred by the fantastic passion for dress and outward shew inclined him to counteract this tendency, as far as he could, by his example of plainness and indifference about these objects. For it seems to have been an invariable rule of his conduct, not so much to regard the dictates of his own taste and inclinations, as by his example, and also by his writings, to throw as much weight as he could into that scale of manners which he thought was too much neglected by the spirit of the age.

Mr. Day wished to make himself useful to mankind, not only by the means which an easy fortune with a mind superior to ostentation afforded, but also by his own personal and habitual exertions; and he therefore considered what mode of study and life he should adopt, in order

to prosecute his purpose with most effect. His humanity suggested at first the study of medicine, that he might be able to relieve those, whose indigence prevented them from receiving the assistance of the medical faculty. But he declined this project, when, upon consulting his friend *Dr. Small* on the means of putting it in execution, that able and candid physician represented to him, that however learned, ingenious and diligent the professors of medicine had undoubtedly been, they had not yet been able to bring the rules of their art to that degree of certainty and precision, which is rather to be wished than expected; that indeed an immense stock of knowledge and observation had been collected, but that the application to particular cases was difficult; and that success in practice depended less on the discovery of new remedies or peculiar methods, than on the sagacity, which some happily possess, founded indeed principally on native genius, but brought into habit only by long and constant experience, and which points out to them, as it were by an intuitive glance,

the *well-timed* employment of the means already discovered.

Whatever desire Mr. Day might have to be useful to his fellow-creatures, the idea of the possibility that he might some time do them an involuntary injury was an unfurmountable obstacle to the execution of the project which he had intended, and he therefore prudently left the practice of this difficult art to those who can professionally devote themselves to it. Besides, a more mature reflection convinced him, that most of the physical evils, or at least the intensity of these evils, which the poor of this or any other country suffer, derived their origin in great measure from moral considerations, and chiefly from defects in the laws, which not only do not prevent but often promote a corruption of manners, which is the immediate cause of that extreme poverty and distress to which the inferior class is apt to sink, upon any accident to their health or circumstances. He justly conceived then, that the removal of these sources of the misery of the people, by an improved legisla-

tion, was an extensive field for the noblest exercise of ability united with benevolence ; and although he was well aware of the difficulty of the execution, and the uncertainty of success, he wished however to render himself capable of the attempt, if an occasion should ever present itself. He formed a resolution to study the law, not only with a view to this object, but also that he might more effectually maintain the character which he aspired at, of defending the rights of mankind ; and not without a wish, that he might some time be able to contribute to disentangle the system of English laws, so excellent in genuine principles, from those feudal and other absurdities which disgrace and perplex it, the vapid remains of institutions of which the spirit has been long evaporated. He accordingly entered himself in the Middle Temple, and after the customary time he was called to the bar ; but not being ambitious of the emoluments and honours with which that profession abounds, he never practised as a counsellor or pleader. His political writings however, especially his *Dialogue between a Justice of Peace and a Farmer*, shew

shew that he possessed much legal knowledge, particularly what relates to important constitutional or general questions.

Mr. Day's first literary production was the poem intitled, *The Dying Negro*. In the composition of this poem, he was joined by a very ingenious friend and school-fellow, the late *John Bicknell*, Esq. afterwards counsellor at law; So that it has been sometimes attributed to one of these gentlemen, and sometimes to the other. (*f*) In this first dawn of genius, we may discern not only the fervid fancy of a youthful poet, and the tender strains of a sensible heart, but also the glowing passion of philanthropy, and the indignation of humanity at the practice of subjecting one unfortunate part of our species to the dominion, avarice, and cruelty of another. Nothing could be more conformable than the subject of this poem to the humanity of his disposition, and to the principles which he had adopted. The protection of the injured Africans seemed to be a corollary of his system. Several years afterwards, when the subject had begun

to engage general attention, he published a fragment of a private letter which he had written some time before to an American gentleman, on the *Slavery of Negroes*, and he addressed this *Fragment of a Letter*, as it was intitled, to the States of America, thinking that they could not better prove that they had merited their own liberty, which they had lately acquired, than by giving the glorious example to other nations of emancipating their negroes, and abolishing slavery for ever in their territories. A juster description of this pamphlet cannot be given than in the words of that venerable friend of liberty, *Dr. Price*, who calls it, “ a remonstrance, full of energy, directed to the American States by a very warm and able friend to the rights of mankind.” *

Marriage could not well fail of entering into a plan of life, formed on the principles of virtue. There was here however some difficulty : he

* *Dr. Price's Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution.*

had resolved upon a life of retirement and simplicity, in which nothing was to be sacrificed to fashion and vanity, but much to beneficence. This was easy to him, as it was a part of his connected system, and his mind was prepared for it. But where was he to find, among the fair females of the age, so uncommon a taste? With his customary frankness he used to declare his intended mode of living, but he did not often meet with marks of approbation from his female hearers.

The picture which he had formed to himself of the character of the fair one whom he wished to find and to associate with, as the companion of his life, is drawn in a poem which he wrote in one of his juvenile solitary excursions to the West of England. From a journal which is left of that ramble, the poem appears to have been written in some part of Dorsetshire, where the beauties of the country seem to have captivated his imagination, and suggested those tender wishes so often expressed by poets, and felt at some time by every young and sensible mind,

of

of passing their days in tranquil, unambitious retirement, along with the object of their love and confidence. The poem is written in a style so descriptive of the movements of the heart which dictated it, that it cannot fail to be acceptable to the reader, although it was never intended by the author for publication.

WRITTEN *during a TOUR to the WEST OF ENGLAND.*

Hic ipso tecum consumerer ævo.

FROM every rich and gaudy scene,
Which crowded capitals display,
I court the solitary green,
Or o'er the pathless mountains stray.

From vice, from folly, pomp, and noise,
On reason's wings I fly:
All hail ye long-expected joys
Of calm tranquillity!

At least in this secure retreat,
Unvisited by kings,
Has Virtue fix'd her halcyon seat,
And Freedom waves her wings.

O gen-

O gentle Lady of the West,
 Whose charms on this sequester'd shore,
 With love can fire a stranger's breast ;
 A breast that never lov'd before !

O tell me, in what silent vale,
 To hail the balmy breath of May,
 Thy tresses floating on the gale,
 All simply neat thou deign'st to stray !

Not such thy look, not such thy air,
 Not such thy unaffected grace :
 As 'mid the Town's deceitful glare,
 Marks the proud nymph's disdainful face.

Health's rosy bloom upon thy cheek,
 Eyes that with artless lustre roll,
 More eloquent than words to speak
 The genuine feelings of the soul.

Such be thy form ! thy noble mind
 By no false culture led astray ;
 By native sense alone refin'd
 In Reason's plain and simple way.

Indifferent if the eye of Fame
 Thy merit unobserving see :
 And heedless of the praise or blame
 Of all mankind, of all but me.

O gentle Lady of the West !

To find thee, be my only task ;

When found, I'll clasp thee to my breast :

No haughty birth or dower I ask.

Sequestered in some secret glade,

With thee unnotic'd would I live ;

And if Content adorn the shade,

What more can Heav'n or Nature give ?

Too long deceiv'd by Pomp's false glare,

'Tis thou must soothe my soul to rest ;

'Tis thou must soften ev'ry care,

O gentle Lady of the West !

Such were the wishes which he then expressed of passing his life in the calm of retirement; which he afterwards actually enjoyed. And such was the description which his fancy had pictured of the fair companion of his days; amiable indeed by her unaffected simplicity and native charms, but perhaps scarcely represented as being possessed of powers enough to make that retirement continue sufficiently interesting. *Hoc erat in votis :—Di melius fecere.*

Among

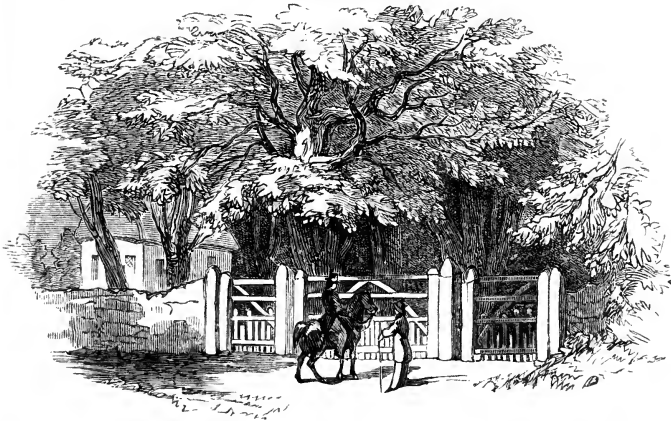
Among the number whom fortune threw in his way, there was one young lady who never failed to attract particular notice. A friend of his, more advanced in years, knowing his wish to settle himself in marriage, could not help expressing his surprize, that he did not shew more serious attentions with regard to her. His answer was truly characteristic: “ He knew
 “ and felt her merit ; and nothing but her *large*
 “ *fortune* prevented him from wishing that he
 “ had it in his power to effect such an union :
 “ for the plan of life which he had laid down
 “ for himself was too remote from common
 “ opinions, to admit of flattering himself with
 “ the expectation of so much conformity from
 “ a person of her affluent circumstances.” It was in vain that his friend urged that there appeared a security for that young lady’s conduct, which few had an opportunity of giving ; young, and mistress of herself and of her fortune, her prudence had been proved ; although admired by men, she was nevertheless beloved by her own sex ; that in the generous and humane use she had made of an ample income, she had
 shewn

shewn a heart no less liberal than his own; and that merit, so tried, was more to be depended on than any general rule or system. But the system prevailed, as always happens with men of strong characters. Fortunately however, several months afterwards, chance threw him in the way of the same young lady; and having then frequent opportunities of conversation, he discovered that her sentiments were more conformable to his own than those of any of her sex whom he had ever met with. The ingenuousness of his character however required him to be very explicit on the subject of his future mode of life. The event gave full sanction to his choice; the tastes of two persons could not be more in unison than theirs: equally disliking a life of dissipation, and possessed of resources for enjoying retirement, she sensibly partook with him in the pleasures of beneficence, in the exercise of every generous affection, and in the intellectual enjoyments of a cultivated understanding.

Mr.



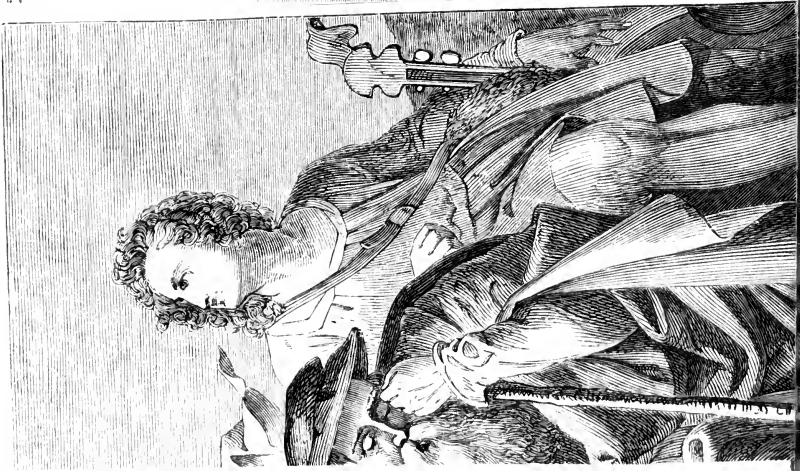
ANNINGSLEY.



LODGE GATE, ANNINGSLEY.



KITCHEN IN ALMNER'S BARN.



Mr. Day was married, on the 7th of August 1778, to Miss *Esther Milnes* of *Wakefield*, in *Yorkshire*.

In the year 1779 he fixed his residence at his estate at *Stapleford*, in *Essex*; and about three years afterwards, he removed to another estate which he had in *Surry*, at *Anningley* near *Chertsey*, where he continued during the remainder of his life. This latter estate, being much uncultivated, gave him an opportunity of practising agriculture to a considerable extent. To this occupation he was strongly attached by several motives. As it is of all arts the most beneficial to mankind, he thought it deserved the most encouragement. He considered the people employed in it as the stamina, if the expression may be allowed, of the human species; or as the source which supplies the waste of mankind in the other degenerating classes of men. The improvement of his land gave him an opportunity of employing a number of labourers, and consequently of doing them most good, by relieving their wants while he encouraged their industry.

And

And as there are times of the year, such as the short days of winter, when the covetous farmers discharge many of their labourers, so that the industrious poor are often distressed, Mr. Day never failed to employ as many as should apply to him for work at these seasons.

Although it be the duty of every citizen to watch over the conduct of government in a free State, this is more peculiarly the province of independent country gentlemen, whose interest can never be different from that of the community in general. The political transactions in England, during the American war, were too interesting to pass unnoticed by a person possessed of any portion of public spirit. Mr. Day's love of liberty, and inflexible regard to the rights of mankind, induced him to vindicate the Americans in their resistance to the imposition of taxes without their consent, and in their subsequent efforts to emancipate themselves from the subjection to which our government attempted by force to reduce them. His attachment to his native country was not of that selfish and illiberal

ral kind which excused or palliated injustice to others, under pretence of national interest; he scorned the wealth that was to be wrested from our colonies by violence, at the will of a parliament, which might be servile and corrupt, in which they had no representation, and of which the members had no common interest and sympathy, nor responsibility to them. Although surely no man ever loved his country more, or was more perfectly *English* in the best sense of that name, yet he was more firmly attached to justice and liberty than to his native soil; and if he could not have enjoyed these blessings here, he would with *Brutus* have considered, “ that “ to be his country where he could be free;” a sentiment which he has expressed with great force in the following beautiful lines, in his poem called the *Desolation of America*, describing the sensations of the first colonists, who, to avoid civil and religious tyranny, fled from the cultivated plains of England, the comforts of civilized life, and the stronger attachments of kindred and habits, to take refuge in the woods and marshes of America.

The favour'd clime, the soft domestic air,
 And wealth and ease, were all below their care;
 Since there an hated tyrant met their eyes,
 And blasted every blessing of the skies.
 For not the winding stream, or painted vale,
 The sweets of summer, or the vernal gale,
 Were formed to fetter down the noble soul
 Beneath the magic of their soft controul.
 Wherever Nature bids her treasures rise,
 Or circling planets rush along the skies,
 Or Ocean rolls his ever-ebbing wave,
 Has fate ordained a refuge for the brave;
 Who claims from Heaven (and Heaven allows the claim)
 To live with Freedom, or to die with Fame;
 And finds, alike contented with his doom,
 In every clime a Country or a Tomb.

Mr. Day could not forbear to give vent to his indignation at the conduct of government, which he did in two animated poems, the first intituled the *Devoted Legions*, and the second the *Desolation of America*. The subject of the former poem is an incident of the Roman history. During the first triumvirate war was declared against the Parthians, in order to gratify the ambi-

ambition and avarice of *Crassus*. *Atteius*, a Roman tribune, having ineffectually opposed the resolution of waging an unprovoked war against a nation then in alliance, struck with the impiety of the proceeding, stood at the gates of Rome, arrayed in the vestments appropriated to the ceremony of devoting armies to the infernal gods, and while *Crassus* was passing at the head of his army, he made the altar, which he had placed at his side, blaze with incense, and with a loud voice pronounced the dreaded invocation, devoting the unfortunate General and Legions to the destruction, which actually awaited them; and to which the panic then struck into their minds by this awful solemnity might perhaps have contributed.

This poem is addressed to *Lord George Germaine*, the Secretary of State, who directed the military operations, and to the *commanders of the forces* against America; and in its obvious allusion to the calamities which might be expected from waging an unjust civil war, the prophetic pretensions of poets were unhappily

too well confirmed by successive defeats and the capture of two entire armies.

The subject of the poem called the *Desolation of America* was an attempt, worthy only of the same secretary, to effect, what fair and open courage could not, the subjugation of America by burning her towns and villages, and by desolating her coasts with an unavailing cruelty, contrary to the laws of war, as well as of humanity, and disgraceful to a civilized nation. The poet relates the lamentations of an aged American, who, with his wife and daughter, had escaped by flight from one of these tragedies, and had arrived breathless at the edge of a thick wood, the shade of which yielded them a secure retreat from the pursuit of the enemy. Here they paused awhile and gave vent to the expression of their sorrows. The mother first begins in the pathetic manner of her sex to lament their misfortunes. Afterwards the venerable father rises “with superior dignity of woe;” and while he deplores the misery of his country, he execrates all attempts to enslave it, and every idea of submission;

mission; and at last raising his manly spirit to hopes of a happy termination of the war by the establishment of the liberty of America, he closes his speech with the following animated apostrophe to his distressed country :

How long, O storm-tost vessel ! wilt thou ride,
 The sport of winds and victim of the tide ?
 While all the elements thy wreck conspire,
 The seas in tempest, and the skies on fire ?
 Yet let the lightnings flash, the billows whirl !
 Be firm, great pilot, nor desert the helm !
 See where a beam of everlasting light,
 The gloom dispersing, rises on thy fight !
 Promise of safety, harbinger of bliss,
 To guide thee wandering on the vast abyss !

O then, unmoved, the mighty danger wait,
 Nor sink below the measure of thy fate !
 Though from each quarter gathering tempests rise,
 Though whirlwinds rock the earth and tear the skies ;
 Let neither Doubt impede, nor Fear transport,
 These are the gales which waft thee to the port,

Upon the first opening of a prospect of peace with America, Mr. Day influenced by the same motives

motives which had induced him to write these poems, and by the accumulated distresses which a most expensive war then poured on our own nation, addressed the public in a pamphlet, entitled, *Reflections on the present State of England, and on the Independance of America*, in order to warn his countrymen against being still misled by vain and delusive hopes of conquest from embracing the opportunity, which then presented itself, of putting an end to a war founded on injustice and tyranny, and accompanied with such successive and extraordinary calamities, as seemed to carry with them marks of the Divine indignation. This pamphlet, which is undoubtedly one of the best political productions in our language, contains a chain of convincing arguments expressed in that fervid style of eloquence, which at once breathes the sincerity of the author, and communicates by a kind of sympathy, conviction to the reader. In a subsequent publication (g) addressed to the *Earl of Shelburne*, he vindicates and praises that minister for having made peace with America and France; without indeed entering into any detail, or discussion of the

the several articles of the peace, but on the general and important ground of the necessity of terminating a ruinous war, of which the original object, the subjugation of America, had been long abandoned even by its first abettors, as impracticable.

Although in the commencement of the American war it must be acknowledged, with humiliation to the British nation, that the greater part of the people had supported the crown in its attempt to subdue America, which they considered as a subject state destined for their benefit and dominion; and although they had then yielded to the delusive hopes of conquest repeatedly held out to them by a minister, whose talents for gaining their confidence were no less conspicuous than his conduct in the abuse of it; yet when succeeding calamities had dissipated these dreams of ambition, and when disgrace and distress had humbled the pride of the people, the voice of the soberer and wiser part of the nation began to be heard, calling out for peace, and for a reformation of the abuses, which had crept

into the constitution, though contrary to its spirit. Accordingly *associations* were formed in different counties of the most independent and public spirited men in order to obtain a redress of grievances, and especially a reform in the representation of the people in parliament, the inequality and imperfection of which had principally enabled the minister, by a lavish corruption, to gain the support and countenance of the legislature in carrying on the most ruinous and unjust war, as well as the most disgraceful, that ever sullied the British annals. Mr. Day could not but join this honest band of patriots; and he soon distinguished himself among them by his zeal and abilities. He attended several of the meetings of the freeholders in different counties where he held estates, Essex, Surry, and Berkshire; and he then displayed the talent, which he possessed in a singular degree, of speaking in public with facility, copiousness, and precision, and with the same masculine and impressive eloquence that marks his political writings. (*b*) Mr. Day did not indeed conceive any very sanguine expectations of success, or that the efforts

of

of the associations would obtain a perfectly reformed representation; but he thought it his duty to keep alive and fan every spark of public spirit, and love of liberty, which shewed itself among the people; and he was not altogether without hopes that some accession of weight to the popular scale in the government might be gained, by which at least, “a portion of new health,” as the illustrious Earl of Chatham had on a former occasion happily expressed it, “might be infused into the constitution, to enable it to bear its infirmities.” He deplored the supineness with which both the gentry and people in general viewed the efforts of the associations, their want of knowledge of their political rights and interests, and of zeal to assert them. For he knew well that it required the concurring efforts of the whole body of the people to oblige those who profited by the abuses of the parliamentary representation to reform them in any considerable degree. But the expectations of even a small degree of reform were frustrated by the too powerful *parliamentary aristocracy*, which being the instrument by which

which the crown gains an influence in government far more effectual than prerogative ever gave, receives in return from thence not only a share of the national treasure, which itself votes so liberally, but also protection of its usurped powers, which it is thereby enabled to defend against any efforts that the people have hitherto made to recover their true rights. These efforts were at this time checked suddenly by an incident no less memorable than instructive. When the associations had by their zeal and activity excited the public attention, and agitated the minds of the people with the hopes of success; at once, as the waves of a ruffled lake are stilled by a few drops of oil, these patriotic movements subsided upon the new minister's promising to move parliament himself for a reform in the representation. Accustomed as the nation had long been to see every thing bend to ministerial will, they doubted not that their cause was now gained; and thinking themselves secure in the expectation of enjoying the fruits of their toils, they dissolved their meetings, and sunk into their original tranquillity. But
however

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however obsequious parliaments had formerly been to ministers in measures ruinous to the nation, the influence of these was now discovered to be of no avail in favour of the rights of the people. Perhaps the minister considered the cause as too sacred for the employment of the ordinary means of obtaining a majority.

But although Mr. Day had not indulged any sanguine hopes of a complete reform, yet when he found that the efforts of the honest part of the nation, with whom he had associated, and whose measure he had zealously supported, had been totally frustrated by the prevalence of particular interests over the public good, he could not suppress his indignation. The following lines written upon the occasion, which have been found among his papers, express, with a force of language and of imagery not easily attained by poets whom only fictitious passions inspire, the indignant patriotism which then agitated his bosom, and his free undaunted spirit which no fortune could bend.

When

When faithless senates venally betray;
 When each degenerate noble is a slave;
 When Britain falls an unresisting prey;
 What part befits the generous and the brave?

If vain the task to rouse my country's ire,
 And imp once more the storks dejected wings,
 To solitude indignant I retire,
 And leave the world to parasites and kings;

Not like the deer, whom wearied in the race
 Each leaf astonishes, each breeze appals;
 But like the lion, when he turns the chace
 Back on his hunters, and the valiant falls.

Then let untam'd oppression rage aloof,
 And rule o'er men who ask not to be freed;
 To Liberty I vow this humble roof;
 And he that violates its shade, shall bleed.

Mr. Day however thought that the minister had fulfilled his engagement by making the promised motion; and he was inclined to wish well to the new administration. He hoped that the minister might be supported against the united efforts

efforts of two parties, which, though formerly adverse, had by a stroke of parliamentary policy joined their powers in one common cause, under the name of the *coalition*. He happened to express these sentiments pretty fully in a letter to a correspondent, who shewed it to a confidential friend of the minister. This gentleman finding Mr. Day's opinions and dispositions favourable to the ministry, and knowing his very respectable character, was desirous of a personal intercourse: and having been informed by their common friend that it could not fail of being equally agreeable to Mr. Day, he sent a note politely proposing an interview. Mr. Day, always desirous of contributing whatever might be in his power to promote the public good, readily accepted this proposal by a letter which he wrote in answer. But before he would meet a gentleman concerned in administration, he thought it proper, in that letter, to make an unequivocal declaration of his own disinterestedness, and to renounce in the most explicit language every idea of personal advantage.

As

As this letter is *singular*, perhaps literally so, and also highly illustrative of the independent principles of the writer, it seems to merit the readers attention :

“ To ——— Esq.

“ SIR,

“ The honour you have done me in addressing a letter to me which I duly received requires an answer, and at the same time I shall rely on your good sense in using a degree of freedom which otherwise might appear unpalatable to gentlemen in your situation.

“ Mr. S—— some days past, when I accidentally called upon him, put into my hands a letter which I had totally forgotten I had ever sent him, and asked me whether I had any objection to his shewing it to some of the gentlemen that were at present concerned in the administration of affairs, and acquainting them with the good wishes which I had frequently in conversation expressed towards them. I looked
over

over the letter and told him, that I was not in the least ashamed of any of the sentiments contained in it, nor had altered them unless in one particular: when I wrote that letter I should not have refused a seat in parliament had I been disinterestedly invited by my countrymen: at present no human temptation would make me leave the privacy and leisure I enjoy in the country. I also warned him of the peculiar delicacy which was required in representing to any gentleman in power, the sentiments of a person who having little to value himself upon but honesty and independence felt an habitual jealousy upon every subject that was connected with them—I imagine that it was in consequence of those considerations that I have been favoured with the letter I am now answering, and that there may be no mistake on either side, I shall take the liberty of stating my present political ideas that you may judge how far they are capable of being converted to any practical use.

“ I have always detested the American war, which I foresaw must exhaust this country exactly

actly in proportion to the time it was carried on: I therefore gave it every opposition which was in the power of so insignificant an individual as myself. Convinced also that the present mutilated state of parliamentary representation was one cause of the public evils which threaten to overwhelm the country, and may in the end occasion the total loss of its liberty, I have sincerely joined with those very respectable gentlemen who in different parts of England have embraced the cause of reformation, but without the most distant hopes of success. I always considered the people as being too supine, and the party who were interested to oppose it as being too powerful to leave many hopes for any one, who did not consider public affairs rather through the medium of enthusiasm than that of sober reason.

“ When Lord Shelburne made the peace, I was convinced that, without any nice examination into its merits, it was the most salutary step which could be taken for the preservation of this country. I was therefore shocked at the cavils which were made against it by those very people,
 who,

who, I am convinced, would have abused him ten times more had he discovered any intention of carrying on the war. But, when that unparalleled scheme of a coalition was fairly exhibited and the immense patronage of the East India Company struck at by those desperate political gamblers who apparently wished to establish a power alike independent of king and people, I thought it my duty to oppose it with the same spirit that we assist to quench a flame which threatens common ruin to the neighbourhood.

“ With these ideas I own that I am and shall remain favourable to the present Ministry till I shall be convinced by their conduct that it will be a less evil to the country to be under the dominion of the old set than to continue its present government.—I am not in general very partial to persons in power ; but I cannot conceive why a set of men, who are already in possession of all their ambition can wish, may not as well consult the true interest of the country as basely endeavour to destroy it. If Mr. Pitt actuated by these motives wishes to put the almost exhausted resources of the country into some order, to make

provision for the payment of public debts, and to ease the people of some of those burthens, which if they are not taken off will infallibly crush all commerce and industry; if he will endeavour by steadily pursuing these objects to merit the approbation of the virtuous, he will certainly meet with it, and it is their duty to assist him, each according to his ability.

“ As to the reform of parliament, I think Mr. Pitt has discharged his promise, and the very reasons which have provoked some of my brother reformers, are with me the strongest motives for admitting his sincerity—To expect that the minister of a great, and above all a corrupted state like this, should calmly and deliberately demolish the whole frame of government for the sake of making an experiment, is betraying a lamentable ignorance of human nature. I am not myself such a child as either to expect or wish that all government should stand still in such a wonderfully complicated system of society as our own, in order that two or three reformers may try their skill in greasing the wheels.

“ But what I think may be fairly required of the present ministry is, that they should pursue national objects by fair and honourable means; that if they are not devoid either of interest or ambition, these passions should be worked up with public good and not predominate in the piece; and that they should never be so entirely engrossed with the dirty ideas of preserving their places as to sacrifice truth, consistency, and public interest, and private integrity.

“ You, Sir, must be the best judge of the ends and principles of the gentlemen with whom you act. If they are such as I have described, you may at any time command all the assistance that so unimportant an individual as myself can give, but you may depend upon it that I should become your most determined enemy, were I ever convinced that your designs were of a contrary nature.

“ As to myself, I am no more ashamed of supporting a good than of opposing a bad government; both kinds of conduct must alter-

nately flow from the same spirit, and in this, like every thing else, the best and wisest conduct is placed between the two extremes—One thing more I will take the liberty of adding—However little you may conceive that any man can approach the treasury either with pure hands or a pure heart; I cannot help endeavouring to make you believe in such a miracle; and therefore whether our correspondence should finish here or be extended any farther, I must, in the most unequivocal language, abjure all views of profit, interest or patronage, and give it under my own hand that if I am ever detected in deviating from these principles, I consent to be called a fool, a rascal, and an hypocrite.—

“ I have taken the liberty of giving you every explanation I am able of my views and sentiments. If the sample does not suit, you will owe me no apology for not giving yourself any farther trouble upon my account, and be assured that I shall be as little inclined to become an enemy by want of notice as I should be made a friend to any administration, by any attentions
they

they could shew. I am sufficiently acquainted with human things to desire nothing farther than what I already enjoy : it is therefore I must ingenuously confess with great reluctance that I find myself even honoured in the manner I am at present ; but if consistently with the principles I have laid down you think I can be of any use, I will wave the point of ceremony and wait upon you when I come to town.

“ I am, Sir,

“ With the greatest respect,

“ Your faithful humble servant (*i*)

“ THOMAS DAY.”

Annesley, near Chertsey, Surry,

September 5, 1785.

The experience which Mr. Day had of the conduct of political parties, and the failure of the efforts of the associations, seemed to have abated considerably his enthusiasm with respect to the practicability of plans for reforming government. In the warmth of youth he had given scope to his virtuous indignation against the abuses and corruptions which prevail in all governments, and to his imagination in forming

plans for their correction. But when he had an opportunity of seeing how few were animated with a sincere love of their country ; how deficient in zeal and activity this principle was among most of those who possessed it ; how often in parties the public cause was but a mask for some scheme of private ambition ; how prevalent was the corruption of manners, the most dangerous foe to liberty ; he was sensible what a feeble stand the defenders of public rights could make against invaders actuated by ambition, avarice, and other powerful selfish passions. His maturer reflexion also suggested to him, that good and evil were so blended in human affairs, that one arose often unexpectedly from the latter ; that governments were sometimes obliged, by the prejudices of the people or by the interests of individuals, to withhold part of the good which they wished to accomplish, and to permit evils, the correction of which would be followed by some still greater evil ; and he accordingly became more indulgent towards men in power for the little good which they generally effected.

But

But although his expectations of reforming public affairs were thus in a great degree abated, he did not think himself at liberty to fall into a state of political inactivity, or to remit any exertion by which he might preserve the freedom and promote the interest of his country. On the contrary, he still considered it as his duty to watch the measures of administration; to check the gradual but continual encroachments of men entrusted with power, by subjecting their conduct to public examination, by enlightening the people on their true interests, by warning them when their rights should be in danger, and by rousing their spirits on proper occasions to assert them; or to allay popular ferments when excited by designing men to favour their own ambition.

Therefore, notwithstanding his wishes for the support of administration, he continued still the vigilant guardian of the people, defending their rights whenever attacked, and calling to account the measures of government. Thus in an excellent

pamphlet which he published in 1786, entitled a *Dialogue between a Justice of Peace and a Farmer*, he reprobates the facility with which the legislature of this country sacrifices the civil liberties of the people, one by one, to that Leviathan of the constitution, the *Revenue*, and extends the dominion of its officers and laws, not only over those particular traders, who being capable of distinction from the rest of the people may be subjected to the necessities of the state, as is pretended, without affecting the general liberties of the nation, but also to every individual, and particularly to those classes, who from their general utility, as well as from their modes of life, are the most unfit subjects for revenue regulations. Such are persons employed in agriculture, who cannot now enjoy the ordinary conveniencies of life, a horse to ride on, or a cart to bring victuals from market, without being subject to duties, impositions, and penalties. It was not without sorrow and indignation, that he foresaw the sure and fatal, though slow operation of this universal subjection of all classes of men to the vexatious regulations and arbitrary penalties of the revenue laws;

laws; how it must in time undermine and subdue the spirit of liberty; and by the extension of excise must place a very great part of the wealth and industry of the nation under the controul of government.

It was with the same zeal for the rights of mankind, that he subjoined to one of his political pamphlets, extracts from the *excise-laws*, in order to expose to general view, what appeared to him more wanton and arbitrary infringements of natural liberty and justice than are perhaps to be found in any system of laws on the face of the earth.

In the above mentioned dialogue between a Justice and a Farmer, he controverts and refutes some political principles or rather paradoxes advanced in the writings of *Soame Jennings* and of the *Dean of Gloucester*, unfavourable to liberty, and in opposition to the maxims laid down in *Mr. Locke's Treatise on Government*; he also discusses very fully and ably, a question at that time agitated, respecting *libels*, and he advises the jury-

jurymen to find a general verdict in all cases where they are capable of forming a judgment ; in opposition to an opinion delivered by a judge more celebrated for acuteness of distinction, than for decisions favourable to the freedom of the subject. This pamphlet is written with much legal and political knowledge, united with closeness of argument : and the character of the shrewd and humorous farmer is well maintained.

His last political pamphlet was written on the subject of a bill introduced into parliament under pretence of preventing the exportation of *wool* to France and of favouring the woollen manufacture of this kingdom, but really with a tendency to facilitate the monopoly of wool by the dealers in that article. Mr. Day finding that the interests of the farmers, a class of men whom he regarded as the most useful of any, and whom he wished much to protect, were going to be sacrificed to the avarice of the dealers in wool, and subjected to the vexatious inquisition of revenue-officers, with all the customary

mary restrictions and penalties, undertook their defence in a well-written and animated pamphlet ; in which he proved that the proposed regulations were founded on the most narrow and unenlightened views of commerce, were injurious to agriculture which of all arts deserves the first consideration, and were particularly alarming not only by the restraints imposed, but also by the addition of one instance more of the little regard paid by government to the liberties of the people. This pamphlet was published in form of a letter to *Arthur Young*, Esq. who, together with Sir Joseph Banks and other gentlemen of great respectability, had, after an accurate investigation of the subject, and a full conviction of the bad tendency of the bill, opposed it by incontrovertible facts and unanswerable arguments. Nevertheless the wool-dealers, being men of great property, had parliamentary interest, and the bill was permitted to pass into a law.

Thus did Mr. Day in every instance maintain the truly respectable character of an independent

pendent English country gentleman, ever ready to defend the liberties of his country, and to assert the rights of mankind, while he himself remained superior to personal ambition. But however admirable his public conduct must appear, the pre-eminence of his worth shone no less conspicuously in his private life, which was devoted to the exercise of humanity, and friendship, and to the punctual discharge of every duty.

To enumerate the instances of his bounty, and the pains he took in supplying the wants and relieving the distresses of his fellow-creatures, were to write the minutes of his life. (*k*) It is enough to say that the larger portion of his income was dedicated to these purposes; and that he confined his own expences within the strictest bounds of moderation and economy; both that he might be enabled to be more liberal to others, and that he might, as far as his example could influence, resist the opposite excesses of prodigality and vanity which too generally prevails. He had contemplated much on
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the manners of different ages ; and he thought that the present was distinguished by vanity, luxury, and effeminacy. He had often occasion to observe, in the numerous applications made to him for pecuniary relief, the frequent distress produced in different ranks by the affectation of gentility, and representation of a station superior to their own. In his own conduct, therefore, he gave an example consonant with his principles ; for he lived in a stile inferior indeed in appearance to his fortune, but with an hospitality and plenty that were not confined, as in some more splendid mansions, to those who resided within the walls. A friend of his observing his mode of living, and judging of him by general rules, a method perfectly fallacious when applied to those who think and act for themselves, wrote to him a letter seriously bidding him beware of avarice ; not conceiving that whatever was saved from ostentation and luxury, was given to want and misery.

Such

Such indeed was the unaffected simplicity of his mode of life, that he might have justly inscribed over his unadorned but hospitable threshold, the speech of the modest king Evander to Eneas inviting the Trojan prince into his habitation, which, though humble, had been formerly honoured with the presence of the god Hercules :

———Aude, hospes, contemnere opes,
Et te quoque dignum finge Deo.

He would not indulge himself in the expensive gratification of a taste for the fine arts, as painting, sculpture, and architecture, which is generally considered not only as excuseable in a person of fortune, but as meritorious ; neither would he permit the stream of his wealth to be diverted from its usual humane and benevolent course, by the still more captivating pleasure of exhibiting to the best advantage the beauties of the country in the places of his residence, of multiplying, as it were, these beauties by opening access to all the most favourable points of view, and by adding something to the elegance

gance of nature, without diminishing her simplicity and magnificence. His mind richly fraught with classic and poetic ideas, could not but be sensible of natural and artificial beauty ; and he shewed upon occasions that he was by no means deficient in taste, if he would have permitted himself to have gratified it. But he was restrained by moral considerations, which were the constant rule of his conduct. He observed that a higher value was already adjudged by the world to objects of taste, than was due to them comparatively with those of moral and intellectual merit ; that as they constituted a part of the luxury of the age, they often became, by the expences which they occasioned, contributive to the ruin of families ; and that sometimes they precluded the operation of benevolence in minds naturally impressed with this virtue.

He indulged himself in one article of expence, the purchase of books, of which he acquired a large and good collection. But this expence was not enhanced by the splendor or rarity of the editions, by fine paper, gilt leather or old vellum,

lum, but was regulated by the value of the ideas which they contained. Neither could this expence be considered as a mere personal gratification, when it is considered that his library furnished him with materials, for the composition of his literary works; the sole end and object of which were public utility.

In consequence of his opinion of the prevailing manners, and with a view to guard the rising generation against the infection of the ostentatious luxury and effeminacy, which, amid many excellent qualities, characterise the present age, he wrote the history of *Sandford and Merton*. Despairing of the effects of reason or even of ridicule on those who have already acquired their habits, he hoped to make some impression on the untainted minds of youth. He did not consider the present age as defective, but perhaps superior to any other in humane and generous inclinations, although these are too often rendered ineffectual by habitual expences and imaginary necessities: and it did not appear to him therefore that the many
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ingenious books written lately for children, which principally inculcate humanity and generosity, were sufficient and adequate to all the ends required in the forming of youth. The evil which ought principally to be guarded against, because it is the most predominant, is effeminacy of manners. In this age we fail more from want of strength and firmness, than of sensibility; more from the defect of those habits of fortitude, patience and self controul, by which men are enabled to be what they approve, than from the prevalence of any vicious propensity. Accordingly, the hero of this excellent novel is not, as in most of these compositions, a person of noble or princely birth in disguise, but a *young peasant*, whose body is hardened by toil, who is enured to patience by the fatigues and abstinence of a laborious country life; whose fortitude is confirmed by the habit of exertion; whose appetite whetted by hunger prefers the plainest food to the incitements of luxury; happy in the free and natural exercise of his mind and body, he feels not

the want of the factitious pleasures of an opulent station, nor is he dazzled with its splendor; while humanity, forgiveness of injuries and generosity flow from his breast without effort. These manly virtues in young *Sandford* are contrasted by the feebler character of *Merton*, a boy bred up in opulence, effeminate indulgence, and the pride of wealth and station; whose natural good dispositions, yielding often to the soothing of vanity, are at last confirmed by the wisdom of a tutor, and by the example of the superior merit of the little peasant.

It is in this light of counteracting the effeminacy and imbecility of the present manners, that the history of *Sandford* and *Merton* seems in merit and in effect to rise above any other work that has been written for children: and it will ever remain a monument of the benevolent and unambitious application of Mr. Day's genius to the good of mankind. How well he has succeeded in the execution of his design, appears evidently from the singular
plea-

pleasure and interest with which the little readers run over these volumes. (*l*) The book is written with a warmth that readily diffuses itself into the susceptible minds of youth, and is indeed admirably adapted,

To wake the soul by tender strokes of art,
To raise the genius, and to mend the heart ;
To make mankind in conscious virtue bold,
Live o'er each scene, and be what they behold.*

The unambitious but benevolent employment of his time in writing books for children proves that *utility*, rather than the display of talent, was the motive of his writings. The same inference may be also drawn from his other publications, the subjects of all which were such as his mind was most strongly impressed with, and which influenced his conduct in life ; some object of general humanity, of public right, or of reformation of manners. He could not indeed be insensible of the pleasure which every man must feel when his supe-

* Pope's prologue to Cato.

riority of talents is confirmed by the testimony of the public voice : but he knew to appreciate literary fame, and did not court it.

As then he made his literary labours subservient to his moral views, so it is rather by considering him as a *man* than as an *author*, that this biographical sketch claims the attention of the public. For notwithstanding the degree of excellence which he attained in different kinds of composition, it must be acknowledged that every post of literature is so strongly possessed by our predecessors, both in right of merit and of prescription, that scarcely any path remains open to the temple of Fame, by the mere exertion of human genius. Moderns may please and instruct by their writings, but they can scarcely now excite admiration, which is given only to those, who by their inventive faculty first brought their respective arts to a high degree, though perhaps not the summit, of perfection ; or else, who first transplanted these arts into their native languages, and as it were

natu-

naturalized them in their own countries, with all the advantages which genius could give, and with all the graces which their languages could admit. Whatever can be said after these illustrious heirs of immortality, when said well, has only the merit of a happy imitation, but very seldom the splendor of originality. Yet, although every road to pre-eminence in talents be now almost precluded, a nobler path still remains and ever will remain open not only to the esteem and consideration of men, but also to their love and gratitude, namely the *application* of talents and arts already cultivated to *public utility*. In this view then principally the life and character of Mr. Day are presented to the notice of mankind, and here he holds a distinguished place. If this career be supposed less flattering to vanity, its due dignity will be ever asserted by sober reason. It is also more beneficial to the candidates, as it excites less rivalry and envy, and even attracts the friendship and benevolence of every good man. And, since the examples of those who have suc-

ceeded in this course, are not only more within the reach of imitation, but are also more useful to be followed, they are therefore fitter to be exhibited as patterns of human excellence.

In person Mr. Day was tall, strong, erect, and of a manly deportment. The expression of his countenance, though somewhat obscured by marks of the small pox, indicated the two leading features of his character, firmness and sensibility. His voice was clear, expressive, and fit for public elocution. He could be no physiognomist who did not at once perceive that Mr. Day was not a man of an ordinary character.

Perfectly simple in his manners, he practised none of those artificial representations of excellence, which, however well imitated and supported, being but masks, will drop off in some unguarded moment. He never shewed the smallest inclination to appear more or less wise, good or learned, or more or less any thing

thing than he really was. On the nearest view, no carefully concealed weakness, or disguised selfishness, were ever unveiled; so that the more intimately he was known, the more consistent his character appeared; the inviolable chain of principles which regulated his conduct was more developed; and he was not only the more esteemed and loved, but what is rare and contrary to a general rule, the more also he was admired. Such is the force of genuine unassumed worth, which, like the works of nature, discloses more excellence, as it is more accurately inspected.

In conversation he was unaffected and instructive, and although the habits of his mind generally turned it to objects of importance, yet he seldom failed to mix with his arguments much wit and pleasantry, of which he possessed an abundant vein. When however his principles were contested, he entered into the subject more deeply and fully than is agreeable to the fashionable tone of conversation, which skims

lightly and with indifference over the surface of all subjects and penetrates to the bottom of none. Accordingly mixed companies, such as those of busy and gay life must be, could not be much to his taste. Conversations, in which no sentiment is delivered with freedom or expressed with force, lest it should happen to press upon the character, actions, or connections of some person present, could not accord with the sincerity of his manners. But the more he confined his society within the compass of his friends, the stronger were his attachments to them. Of these attachments, his relations as a son and as a husband, being the closest, were consequently the most conspicuous. As on all occasions he regulated his conduct by the strictest regard to duty, this principle could not fail in these more important instances to produce its full effect: but here its operation was superseded by the strength of his affections. He let no opportunity pass of proving his filial piety, in one case, or of cementing the union of hearts in the other.

The

The following verses addressed to Mrs. Day, during an absence of a few weeks into the north of England, exhibit not a transient fit of tenderness, but the constant and habitual tenor of an affection, which constituted the principal interest of his life :

Let lighter bards in sportive numbers play,
Weave the gay wreath, or join the choral lay,
Round pleasure's altar fading chaplets twine,
And deck their temples with the madd'ning vine !
My chaster muse selects, for fancy's dream,
A dearer object, and a nobler theme.
For thee, thou dear companion of my soul !
She bids spontaneous numbers artless roll ;
Nor scorns the sacred lyre, which long had hung
Forgotten in the shade, untouch'd, unstrung !
Oh ! while thy friend, thy more than lover strays
Thro' this vain world's inexplicable maze,
Shall not *Remembrance* strive with mimic art
To sooth the secret anguish of his heart ?
Come then, thou friend of solitary care !
Unfold the canvas, and the tints prepare ;
Till the fair form in full proportion rise,
Consect to view, and swim before his eyes !

May, 1783.

Mr.

Mr. Day's conduct and motives were often misunderstood. It is perhaps impossible for us to comprehend a character essentially different from our own: and it is thence obvious how many were unfit to judge of him. Some imputed his unostentatious mode of life to *avarice*, although the greater part of his income was expended in acts of generosity; others attributed his retirement to *misanthropy*, although his life was devoted to the service of mankind: and many explained whatever they saw, beyond their own mediocrity, to a love of singularity or *caprice*; although it is evident that his actions flowed from fixed principles with a consistency very seldom equalled. Some might perhaps feel and not quite forgive a declaration of opinions and manners, which their conscious inferiority might represent to their minds as an implied censure on themselves, and as a pretension to superior merit. For envy, which like Tarquin's rod never fails to strike the eminent, does not willingly admit a superiority even in virtue. (*m*)

He

He was not indeed of thatameleon-kind which assimilates itself to the surrounding objects. He neither bestowed smiles of assent or of flattery where his heart disapproved, nor could he conceal his disgust and indignation upon hearing any new instance of tyranny, baseness, ingratitude, or other depravation of the human heart; the relation of which always produced an alteration in his countenance indicating the uneasiness that he felt.

Many actions and opinions, which to others appeared indifferent or even commendable, were frequently to him objects of censure or ridicule, when he perceived some hurtful tendency which had escaped less reflective minds. He had thought much on the subject of manners, and he could trace the sources, effects, and connections of habits and actions, through all the mazes of association. Accordingly to strangers, who did not know his trains of reflection, his remarks appeared sometimes tinged with a severity which was not felt by his friends acquainted

quainted with his habits of reasoning, and with his humanity. (n) For never was severity of principle more tempered with gentleness of disposition. (o) No man inherited more of the kindness of human nature, which shewed itself upon every occasion ; in his active and generous compassion for the wretched, and in his firm and warm attachment to his friends, displayed not only in their more important concerns, but also in the minuter attentions to their interests. For them no service was so laborious that he would not undertake. In their sickness he would watch over and nurse them with a singular anxiety and perseverance. He sympathized sincerely with them under any shade of adverse fortune, and he exulted in every ray of their prosperity. Those of them who survive him will carry to their graves the memory of his friendship. So strong was his affection, that notwithstanding the fortitude with which he resisted all ordinary occurrences, a loss which he sustained in his youth, by the death of a highly valued friend, *Dr. Small*, left a gloom on his mind which a period

riod of two years did not dispel, and which yielded only to a more tender connection, which then happily began to engage all his affections; and which not only restored but also secured his serenity and chearfulness during the remainder of his life. Mr. Day was at Brussels in 1774, when he heard that Dr. Small was seized with a fever. He flew with anxious haste to England, and arrived in Birmingham a few hours after his friend had expired. The following pathetic lines, in which he afterwards gave vent to his sorrow, will shew the sensibility with which he regretted the loss of this valuable man, whom he venerated as the friend and guide of his youth, and whose death he considered as the severest stroke that fortune could then have inflicted :

Beyond the rage of time or fortune's power
 Remain, cold stone ! remain, and mark the hour
 When all the noblest gifts, which Heaven e'er gave,
 Were centered in a dark untimely grave.
 Oh, taught on reason's boldest wings to rise,
 And catch each glimmering of the opening skies !
 Oh, gentle bosom ! Oh, un sullied mind !
 Oh, friend to truth, to virtue, and mankind !

Thy

Thy dear remains we trust to this sad shrine,
 Secure to feel no second loss like thine !

It is remarkable, that the above lines contain a delineation no less exact of the character of the poet himself, than of that of the friend for whose memory they were intended. Nor is it perhaps to be wondered at, when it is considered, that whatever difference might have existed between them in age, experience, and in those discriminating traits of manner and original character which more obviously strike the minds of observers with a pointed likeness; yet as their friendship had been founded on a similarity of virtues, and in many respects of literary taste, and on the coincidence of the same dignity of sentiment and generous philanthropy; the poet full of the energy of grief and friendship, caught chiefly at those qualities which had endeared the deceased to him, and which accorded with the pulses of his own heart. His lines then exhibit an exact image or impression struck from his own mind; and as they had never been employed

ployed as an epitaph to the person for whom they had been intended, they have been happily judged by that friend who knew the poet best, and most laments him, to be the justest delineation of himself, and she has therefore directed them to be inscribed on his tomb. (*p*) And surely whoever there reads them will feel the peculiar force of an inscription, which, besides being a true representation of the character of the deceased, and of the sensibility with which his loss is deplored, is itself a proof and monument of his genius and ardent friendship; while the common friends, (for several remain) of the two excellent persons to whose memory these lines have been at different times consecrated, will not be displeased to vent, in one sigh, their mingled sorrows.

This union of severity of principle with gentleness and humanity of disposition, added to his firmness in virtuous action, may remind us of the character finely drawn by Shakespeare of the younger *Brutus* :

His

His life was gentle, and the elements
 So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up,
 And say to all the world, *This was a man !*

To Brutus we may also trace a resemblance in the love of his country, and in his hatred to tyranny, as well as in his attachment to the study of philosophy and eloquence. Although fortune placed the illustrious Roman in the most conspicuous point of view and admiration, and allowed the other to enjoy his chosen retirement, seeming thereby to preclude all parallel; although it was given to the former to immortalize his name by one splendid stroke, the very memory and glory of which has ever been a Dionysian sword of terror hanging over the heads of tyrants, and which, more than any other event in history, has inspired the flame of liberty; and although, in our happier days, such great exertions are no longer required; yet such was the firmness of the character of our countryman, so deeply rooted was his enmity to every mode of oppression, so smitten was his mind with the love of mankind; that

that no great occasion could have presented itself for the service of his country, in which intrepid exertion and self-devotion were called for, to which he would have been wanting.

On the 28th day of September, 1789, as Mr. Day was riding from his house in Surry to his mother's seat at Barchill, an end was at once put to his valuable life, at the age of forty-one years. His horse, having taken fright at the sight and motion of a winnowing vane, started suddenly across the road, by which his balance was so disturbed, that his spur happened to stick in the flank of the animal, which thereupon exerting all its strength threw its rider to a considerable distance with his head foremost on a stony road. By this fall, his brain suffered such a concussion, that he never afterwards spoke; but being carried to a neighbouring house, he died before the surgeon who was sent for could arrive.

His wife and mother hearing of his fall, but ignorant of the event, flew to the fatal spot, and were going to enter the house where he had lately

expired, when they were stopped by the surgeon, whose troubled aspect, expressive silence, and waving hand pointing to them to return, informed them too clearly, that no hope remained.

Ye aged parents, who have seen snatched from you, by a sudden stroke of fate, the only prop of your declining days, the glory of your name ! Ye virtuous matrons, from whose faithful bosoms a cruel and untimely death has torn the loved object of your chaste and sacred vows ! think, for ye cannot describe, the anguish of this venerable parent and affectionate consort, when they felt that their dearest hopes were at once extinguished, the colour of their days henceforward darkened, and that nothing remained to them but the memory of having been the mother and the wife of such a man !

Thus, in this instance, neither has the promised length of days been given as the reward of piety towards a parent, nor has a life dear to his friends, and devoted to the service of mankind, been prolonged beyond the short period of forty-

one years. Yet let us not think that beneficent Heaven has in vain given this life, which, though short, was not only highly prosperous to him, but also useful to others, and instructive to his survivors. For he not only passed through that best period of human life, in which health and active spirits exhilarate, and novelty gives its enlivening gloss to the world, without suffering the bodily derangements, the mental apathy, the *tædium vitæ*, which cast a shade on our declining days (*q*); but this period was also marked with the fairest traits of human felicity. For what can be happier than for a man of a vigorous mind to give free scope to his intellectual capacity; for a man of a humane and generous spirit to be enabled by fortune to indulge himself so liberally in beneficence; for a man born for friendship to be sincerely beloved by his friends, and not to survive them; for a man of a tender and affectionate heart to repose his entire confidence, love and esteem in the most congenial bosom; and lastly to enjoy, in a higher degree than is often given to our frail natures, the most sincere of all pleasures, the true and the adequate re-

ward here of a virtuous life, a conscious innocence and a self-approving mind?

His life, I have said, was also instructive to his survivors. For can any thing be more animating to virtue than such an example? Will it be urged that he acquired no elevated station or honours? He attained a greater glory and felicity: he despised them.

One thing only is wanting to his merit, which may yet be supplied by some able friend; a firmer hand than mine to bind a wreath round his tomb. Yet it needs no ornament: his death was accompanied by the best eulogy, the tears of those whom his humanity had comforted, and their common lamentation, which was echoed through the country, that *the good Mr. Day was no more!* (r) And the most honourable tribute will be paid to his memory, when some ingenuous youth, reading his works, that best monument raised by himself, shall catch the generous enthusiasm, and devoting himself to the service of mankind, shall emulate

late by his virtues, the bright example of the author's life.

If it should be suspected that the representation here given is pourtrayed by the too partial hand of friendship, it must indeed be owned, that it is drawn, as the Italian painters say, *con amore*. But, exaggerations would ill accord with a character of such simplicity and truth : his conscious shade would spurn the praise that was not his. Upon re-surveying and comparing what has been said with the judgement which I have formed by observation during more than twenty years, in which an unreserved confidence laid open his character and opinions, and every succeeding year added to my esteem ; and with all the precaution that I can use to guard against the influence of that affection with which I cherish the remembrance, at once pleasing and melancholy, of a friend no less loved than revered ; I find that the portrait which I have given is drawn in fainter colours than the image which I retain in my mind.

To pretend that any human being was free from imperfections, would be to shew ignorance of human nature. That he might often mistake the best means of attaining his end, or that he might be deceived with the appearance of good; that his inclinations might sometimes influence his judgement, or that he might perhaps at other times go to an excess on the side contrary to that which he wished to shun; is saying nothing more than that he was a *man*.

It is alledged by some modern writers, that a person is of no consequence unless he possess the spirit of the age in which he lives. By this quality he is indeed most likely to make his fortune in the world. But the man who does not rise above the level of his age is not worth recording. For why should we describe what we need only step into any street, or any house to see living patterns of, alike in manners and opinions, as coins struck in the same dye; every part of their original differences smoothed into one uniform conventional form? Does a naturalist prefer the dull rounded pebbles of the strand brought into

into a similitude of figure by mutual attrition to the splendid crystallizations found in the cavities of the earth, where each different kind shoots without restraint into its peculiar shape, exhibiting all the variety of geometrical arrangement; and does not he especially value those, which, by their strength of texture, preserve their native forms and lustre, even when rolled in the stream along with the common mass of matter?

It may be imagined that virtues too remote from common manners are seldom imitated, and are therefore useless: and it has been alledged by some writers, fond of refinement, that the virtues of Cato, Brutus, Demosthenes, Cicero, l'Hospital, Sydney, and of other best and greatest men in different periods, being incompatible with the manners of the age in which they lived, were ineffectual and useless. It is true indeed that they did not prevail against the abuses to which they were opposed, but they were not therefore unprofitable. They kept alive at least, the love and admiration of public virtue; their

very fame after death, and the statues of some of them carried in the funeral processions of their posterity, were in after-times the only checks which remained to tyranny; and their glorious examples still living in our contemplation, do now make a part of the human mind, and have their influence on modern affairs.

He that effects, by his writings or by his actions, a permanent change on the minds of men, deserves to be considered as of no less importance in the history of the human species, than a statesman or conqueror who produces a revolution in a kingdom. The latter effect is sudden and striking. The former is gradual and often unperceived in its progress; it exists however through all ages, and extends beyond the boundaries of kingdoms. It is in morals, as in arts, where the first efforts are often ineffectual: but the first step must be made before the second can; and a project, which had commenced with disappointment, may at length open a channel of commerce, which, by its wealth added to the state, shall turn the scale of empires.

It is but a few years ago that the grand and comprehensive plans of political and civil reformation proposed and attempted by an able and virtuous minister in France, Mr. *Turgot*, were rejected with contempt and ridicule as visionary and impracticable; but they have ever since been gaining ground in the public opinion; they have greatly hastened the dissipation of political prejudices; and they have been adopted as a principal part of the reformation now carrying on in that kingdom, where for the first time, since the commencement of history, Truth, Reason, Justice, and Liberty seem to be establishing one common throne. (s)

The man who oversteps the genius of his age; whether it be a statesman who has the courage and virtue to break through the rampart of popular and ancient prejudices cemented by the self-interest of those who profit by the abuses; or the philosopher who by his discoveries hastens the progressive improvement of the human mind; or the moralist who by some happy effort of genius is able to stem the tide
of

of corrupted manners and turn it into a purer channel ; carries with him his existence into future times, and becomes one of the links of ten unperceived of the great chain of causes and effects by which the moral world is suspended.

It cannot be imagined then that the virtuous emotions excited by reading the many thousands of copies of Sandford and Merton, which have already been distributed in different languages, can subside at once in the young breasts where they were felt, but rather that they will continue and spread their influence more and more. And thus, by means of his works, as well as by the admirable pattern of the Author's life, the great object of his heart, *Beneficence to Mankind*, may be perpetuated beyond the short period of his existence here to succeeding generations.

N O T E S.

(a) Page 2.

DR. Johnson, in his *Lives of the English Poets*, is not free from this fault, and has given the example to his numerous biographers, who have retaliated with severity on his own memory. The singular *naïveté* however with which one of his biographers, the ingenious historian of Corsica, has spoken of himself as well as of his friend, whom he really venerates, while he sometimes makes his reader smile, ought to exclude that gentleman from this censure, at least with respect to intention.

(b) Page 12.

The same gentleman (William Seward, Esq.) who very obligingly furnished me with the anecdote related in page 12, and some others which occurred, while he was at school along with Mr. Day, told me, that upon one occasion, he had been saved from some danger, by Mr. Day's voluntarily exposing himself to it.

Another little anecdote is told of him by his relations, which refers to a very early age, and which indicated the marked decision of his character in general, and particularly the perseverance with which he investigated truth and knowledge. When he was yet a child in petticoats and had just learnt to read, he was particularly pleased with the striking descriptions contained in the book of Revelations, and finding there many things not very intelligible, he asked more explanations from his friends than they could easily give. Being puzzled, as many others have been, to know who the *whore of Babylon* is, he asked his mother, and she, to evade

evade the question, said she did not know, but that he might ask the rector of the parish when he should come next to the house, not conceiving that the child would think any more of the matter. However some considerable time afterwards when the clergyman was present along with a good deal of other company, the little boy stood before him in the middle of the room and called out, "Sir, I want to know who the whore of " Babylon is?" The parson, surprised and somewhat embarrassed at being so peremptorily catechised, said, after some hesitation, "My dear, " that is allegorical." The explanation, as sometimes happens, being more perplexing than the original difficulty: "Allegorical!" the boy replied, "I do not understand that word." Then after some consideration, he threw a look of contempt on the parson, and running up to his mother, whispered to her, "He knows nothing " about it."

(c) Page 28.

Mr. Day having heard that a young officer had spoken to his pupils with too great freedom, called him to account, and pointing to a brace of pistols which he had brought with him, said, he was ready to defend their minds, as he would their persons, from insult, at the hazard of his life. The officer disavowed any intention to offend.

(d) Page 29.

This expression was found in a letter from Mr. Day to Richard Lovel Edgworth, Esq. who having maintained an uninterrupted correspondence with Mr. Day from his early youth to his decease, has many letters from Mr. Day describing the state of his mind at different periods. Mr. Edgworth was so obliging as to send several of these letters with a view to assist the writer in this biographical sketch.

(e) Page

(e) Page 32.

Dr. *Small* was born in the year 1734, at *Car-mylie*, in the county of *Angus* in *Scotland*, of which place his father was minister. He was appointed professor of natural philosophy in the University of *Williamsburg*, in *Virginia*, where he resided a few years. He died in 1775, at *Birmingham*, where he had practised medicine several years, and where he had acquired great reputation and esteem. He, as also *Mr. Day*, died at the age of 41.

Dr. *Small*'s memory was honoured not only by the very pathetic epitaph written by *Mr. Day*, as quoted in the text, page 93, but also by the following lines which the physician, who had attended him in his last illness, and who had strove to save his life with all the skill which the art of medicine affords, and with a zeal which friendship and esteem inspired, inscribed in a grove that another friend had dedicated to the memory of the deceased.

Ye gay and young, who thoughtless of your doom,
Shun the disgustful mansions of the dead,
Where melancholy broods o'er many a tomb,
Mould'ring beneath the yew's unwholesome shade;
If chance ye enter these sequester'd groves,
And day's bright sun-shine for a while forego,
O leave to folly's cheek the laughs and loves,
And give one hour to philosophic woe!
Here, while no titl'd dust, no fainted bone,
No lover bending over beauty's bier,
No warrior frowning in historic stone,
Extorts your praises, or requests your tear;
Cold Contemplation leans her aching head,
On human woe her steady eye she turns,
Waves her meek hand, and sighs for science dead,
For Science, Virtue, and for *Small* she mourns.

A better testimony cannot be given of Dr. Small's great worth than the praises bestowed on him by such men as Mr. Day, and the author of the above lines, who, by the composition of these, and more especially of that exquisite poem, the *Botanic Garden*, in which the graces themselves seem to decorate the temple of science with their choicest wreaths and sweetest blossoms

foms, appears to give a sanction to the ancient mythology, which made the same *Apollo*, the god of phyfic and of song.

(f) Page 39.

Mr. Stockdale bookfeller in Piccadilly intended to reprint an edition of the *Dying Negro*, fome years ago, while both the authors were living, and had for this purpose obtained a copy of the poem from Mr. Day, in which his lines and Mr. Bicknel's were diftinguifhed from each other by appropriated marks. The intended publication was at that time prevented by an edition from another bookfeller, but will be completed in the next edition, with the proper marks.

(*) Page 40.

This letter had been actually written without any view of publication to an American gentleman, who being poffeffed of many flaves had
I requested

requested Mr. Day to give his sentiments on the subject of slavery, having received the highest opinion of his wisdom and virtue from their common friend, Mr. *Laurens*, son to the President of the Congress. This young Mr. *Laurens* was afterwards killed near the close of the war, in a skirmish, fighting for the liberty of America. Mr. Day had been well acquainted with him in London, and entertained a very high opinion of his worth. He was much affected with the news of the death of this young American patriot, as appears from the following verses, composed in the form of an epitaph, in which he expresses his sorrow and the warmth of his friendship.

Here the last prey of that destructive rage,
Which shook the world, and curs'd a guilty age;
Here youthful *Laurens* yielded up his breath,
And seal'd a nation's liberties in death.
O may that country, which he fought to save,
Shed sacred tears upon his early grave!
And Fame which urg'd him on to meet his doom,
Bid all her laurels flourish round his tomb!
But vain, alas! to soothe a *Father's* woe,
The mould'ring trophies glory can bestow!

O'er

O'er thy sad urn, O much-lov'd youth, reclin'd,
 What fond ideas rush upon his mind !
 All, all the hopes thy childhood could inspire,
 Thy youth's mild dawn, thy manhood's active fire !
 But chief, that native gentleness of soul,
 Which neither war nor passion could controul !
 Dear to the human race, but doubly dear
 To him who pours the tributary tear,
 Who mourns the public losses and his own,
 And with a trembling hand inscribes this stone.

Mr. Day has given a short but pathetic eulogium of this young gentleman in a note subjoined to the above-mentioned fragment of a letter on the slavery of negroes; and he again deploras the fate of his friend in the following verses which have been found among his papers :

Or, by the Delawar's resounding shores,
 Or where the Brounxs its humbler tribute pours,
 Or where responsive to the captive's woe,
 The thund'ring waves of Saratoga flow ;
 What shrieks of woe were heard along the plain,
 What tides of gen'rous blood increas'd the main,
 When Britain's banners to the winds unroll'd
 Shook death and vengeance from each angry fold ;

And touch'd with sacred rage and freedom's charms
The western world exulting rush'd to arms.

O fatal fields ! where civil discord gave
Such wide destruction to the kindred brave ;
Strewn o'er your deserts bleak and wild they lie,
Expos'd to every blast that chills the sky.
Thither the screaming falcon wings his way,
Thither the wolf and every beast of prey :
Loud howls the forest to the savage roar,
And the fell eagle bathes his plumes in gore.
There oft as evening lights her paly lamp,
And shrouds the drear expanse with mantle damp,
The wand'ring peasant stops, with fear aghast,
To hear ideal wailings in the blast ;
While gliding o'er the melancholy green,
The angry ghosts of mighty chiefs are seen ;
Backward he turns his steps, nor dares to tread
The dreadful haunts of the majestic dead.

But, ah ! no sounds that sadden in the wind,
No shadowy forms can daunt the virgin's mind,
That nightly wanders o'er the gloomy plain,
To seek with pious steps a lover slain—
From blazing hearths and cheerful roofs she flies,
Despair and madness blended in her eyes ;

The

The wintry tempest lifts her floating hair,
Howls round her head, and chills her bosom bare;
While reckless she of comfort and of life
Hears nor regards the elemental strife;
But stretch'd, unhappy mourner! on the ground,
Bends o'er the dead and kisses every wound.
In vain the rising morn dispels the dew,
The rising morn beholds her grief renew,
In vain returning shades of night descend,
No shades of night shall give her sorrows end,
Till death in pity wings his blunted dart,
And life's last tide is frozen at her heart.

O fatal fields! though many a warrior-ghost
Has wing'd his flight untimely from your coast,
Did you e'er view a nobler victim slain,
To glut the bloody rites of freedom's fane,
Than when the valiant *Laurens* met his doom,
And sunk lamented to an early tomb?

(g) Page 54.

This letter was published, and also several others, under the title of *Letters of Marius*.

They are contained in *Stockdale's Collection of Mr. Day's political Tracts*, 8vo.

(b) Page 56.

Several of these *Speeches* were printed and distributed by the *society for constitutional information*. As this society was used to distribute, *gratis*, political publications with a view of giving to the people just notions of government, it is derided by Mr. *Burke*, (who laments that "in this age every thing is discussed,") under the name of "a poor charitable club." He seems to have overlooked, that to be at once *poor* and *charitable*, shews peculiar merit.

(i) Page 69.

The disinterestedness so strongly expressed in the above letter seems to have been a part of the
system

system which he had resolved to pursue. For in a speech at a meeting of the freeholders of the county of Essex, at the time of the associations, he made the following declaration :

“ The motives which have impelled me to
 “ the service I have this day chosen are equally
 “ unmixed with interest and ambition. The
 “ uniform tenour of my former life, voluntarily
 “ devoted to leisure, study and retirement, the
 “ independence of my fortune, and the con-
 “ tempt I have always shewn for the pageantry
 “ of the world, ought to be a sufficient evidence
 “ of my sincerity. All that is farther in my
 “ power, is publicly to declare the resolution
 “ which I have long taken, that under no pre-
 “ text whatever, I will stoop to solicit favours
 “ from any party, or even to accept of wages
 “ from my country. And when I shall be
 “ convicted of attempting to evade these profes-
 “ sions, I will submit without appeal to all the
 “ infamy I shall deserve. A man who acts upon
 “ principles like these can have nothing to hope
 “ even from the amplest success, beyond the
 “ happiness

“happinefs of his country and the confciouf-
 “nefs of having difcharged his duty. And this
 “confcioufnefs, whatever elfe may be my
 “fate, I truſt I ſhall bear with me into retire-
 “ment.”

The independency of Mr. Day's mind was no
 lefs conspicuous on other occaſions. He had
 been ſeveral times requeſted by the popular party
 to ſtand as candidate for a ſeat in parliament, and
 although he would not have declined that truſt
 if he had been voluntarily choſen by his country-
 men, yet he diſdained to uſe the ordinary means
 of ſolicitation. For, to him a ſeat in parliament
 would have been conſidered only as a truſt ac-
 companied with much fatigue in the faithful dif-
 charge of it, but without any perſonal advantage.

Among the friends who urged Mr. Day to
 ſtand as candidate for a ſeat in parliament, was
 that ſtrenuous aſſertor of liberty, *Dr. Jebb*. The
 following copy of a letter from Mr. Day, which
 ſeems to have been written in anſwer to one
 which he had received on this ſubject from
 this

this honest and zealous patriot, shews that his mind was much superior to ordinary ambition, and that he would no more stoop to solicit and care for the multitude, than to court the favour of the great.

To DOCTOR JEBB.

“MY DEAR DOCTOR JEBB,

“Were I to proportion my thanks for the trouble you give yourself on my account to the value which the favour bears in the eyes of ambitious men, I should find no words sufficiently strong for the obligation: were I only on the contrary to consider the sentiments it excites in my own mind, I should hardly thank you for the crown of thorns, which in the true spirit of Christianity, you have so often endeavoured to weave for my head. But I will exactly do neither one nor the other; I will thank you with the sincerest gratitude for the continual marks of esteem you shew me, being entirely convinced that, in almost you alone, such services can be considered as the most genuine and unequivocal

unequivocal marks of esteem. On the other hand, I must take the liberty of impressing my real opinions and feelings upon the subject, which however dissonant to general practice, may perhaps receive some confirmation and evidence from the uninterrupted tenor of my past life.

“ The great indifference I have hitherto felt for the common distinctions which so much engage the attention of mankind, seems to me a sentiment so entirely founded upon reason, and a just estimation of human things, that I think it unnecessary to make any apology for it here; of whatever nature however it may be, it certainly increases upon me with increasing years, and time, which takes away from all our other passions, adds nothing either to my desire of riches or honours.

“ With this view of things how is it possible that I should descend to the common meannesses of the bought and buying tribe, or stoop to solicit the suffrages of the multitude, more than I
have

have hitherto done the patronage of the great. Whatever may be the common and flimsy pretensions of popular men, I believe that few entertain any doubt, that their own interest or vanity is in reality the predominant principle of their exertions. It was not in the forum, amidst the tribe of begging, cringing, shuffling, intriguing candidates, but in their farms, and amidst their rural labours, that the Romans were obliged to seek for men, who were really animated with an holy zeal for their country's glory, and capable of preferring her interest to their own. I neither pretend to the magnanimity, nor to the abilities of those illustrious men, whom we are more inclined to admire than imitate, but I pretend to all their indifference to public fame, and to all their disinterestedness. Be assured then that these principles, which have always been so wrought up into the groundwork of my character, that they never can be separated without marring the little merit of the piece, will always be an invincible obstacle to my entering the list of public competition."

Mr. Day seems to have had not only an *habitual jealousy* (as he expresses it in the letter quoted in the text) of men in power, but also to have extended in some measure his jealousy to great men out of place. Thus at the time of the associations, a noble Duke, who favoured the popular cause, having sent a message to Mr. Day, acquainting him that a county meeting was intended to be held on a certain day, the latter chose to be absent on that day, not willing to give occasion to his Grace or to others to imagine that he could be influenced in his public conduct by any attachment or complaisance. Though a poet, he had nothing of the ambition of Horace and of most other bards,

Principibus placuisse viris.

(k) Page 76.

Mr. Day met with many instances, as may be supposed, of ungrateful returns for his bounties. They gave him uneasiness, as they were
proofs

proofs of depravation of character. They, however, never lessened his assiduity in doing good: nor did he withhold his assistance when he knew that the distress had been the consequence of frailties. The consciousness of the cause sufficiently aggravates the misery. A certain indulgence is no less necessary a virtue than generosity is. Mr. *D'Alembert* says well, that the motto of a virtuous man is comprised in two words, *donner, pardonner*, "to give and forgive." Mr. Day might have said, with the philosopher in *Ramsay's Voyages de Cyrus*, "Je connois à present les hommes; cependant je ne les hais point, mais je ne sçaurois les estimer. Je leur veux, et je leur fais du bien, sans espoir de recompense." I may add, that whenever Mr. Day himself received marks of friendship from others, his acknowledgements were so frank and unreserved, as seem to shew, that the same elevation and liberality of mind discovers itself in the manner either of bestowing favours or of accepting them.

(l) Page 83.

Several editions of Sandford and Merton have been published in England, within these few years. It has been reprinted in America; and it has been translated into French by M. *Berquin*, the author of *L'ami des Enfants*, and also into German.

(m) Page 90.

Soon after Mr. Day's death, several paragraphs appeared in the newspapers, inserted by different persons desirous of doing justice to his worth. Among these tributes of voluntary praise, one deserves by its elegance to be distinguished and remembered. It is said to be written by a gentleman whose talents for poetry are well known, and which have been lately rewarded with the poet's laurel, to which his taste and genius add a fresh verdure.

On THOMAS DAY, Esq.

If pensive genius ever pour'd the tear
Of votive anguish o'er the Poet's bier;

If

If drooping Britain ever knew to mourn
 In silent sorrow o'er the Patriot's urn,
 Here let them weep their *Day's* untimely doom,
 And hang their fairest garlands o'er his tomb;
 For never poet's hand did yet consign
 So pure a wreath to Virtue's holy shrine;
 For never Patriot tried before to raise
 His country's welfare on so firm a base;
 Glory's bright form he taught her youth to see,
 And bade them merit freedom to be free.
 No sculptur'd marble need his worth proclaim,
 No Herald's sounding style record his name,
 For long as sense and virtue fame can give,
 In his own works his deathless name shall live.

These praises, however well merited, bestowed
 on a man whom death had secured from ordinary
 envy, did nevertheless draw forth the malice of
 some person, who, under the signature of C. L.
 in one of the newspapers, strove to represent the
 deceased as a *splenic misanthrope*, who had retired
 from the scenes of busy life, where alone, accord-
 ing to this critic, virtue flourishes. He owns,
 however, that this misanthrope bestowed more,
 than half of his fortune in acts of generosity. It is
 to be wished for the sake of the distressed, that more

such misanthropes existed, and the world could well spare, in their room, some of those philanthropists who bestow *smiles* only on their fellow-creatures. It would indeed be very superfluous to enter into any justification of Mr. Day, for having chosen at an early period that *retirement*, which the wisest men of all ages have longed to obtain, after a full experience of busy life; yet it may not be quite superfluous to observe, that retirement, though it gives shelter from the bustle of the world, does not exclude, but favours the will and the power to be useful to mankind. There philosophers and patriots have formed their sublime contemplations. Misery will readily find its way to relief through the thickest shades of a good man's retreat. "An honourable and peaceful retreat," (says the sage and virtuous *Fenelon* in the character of *Socrates*) "where a man is free from his own
 " as well as from the passions of other men, is
 " the properest state for a philosopher. But we
 " must love mankind, and, in spite of defects,
 " endeavour to do them good. To live at a
 " distance from men, yet near enough to do
 " them

“them good, is acting like a benign deity on
“earth.” *Fenelon’s Dialogues and Fables of the
Dead.*

That superior talents have ever drawn on them
envy and calumny, the experience of all ages
abundantly shews. There has always existed
(says an ingenious writer) a secret and general
league of fools against men of understanding, and
of mediocrity against superior talents. But that
eminence in goodness and humanity should at-
tract malevolence may appear surprising. Ne-
vertheless, of this degree of malignity proofs
are unfortunately not rare, nor need we go back
to the days of Socrates for an example. That
illustrious martyr to humanity, the late Mr.
Howard, to whose compassionate ears almost
solely the complaints of distress could pervade
the thick walls of prisons, has not escaped
calumny. It has been lately asserted in several
newspapers, that this man, who devoted himself
to the exercise of mercy, was so cruel to his son,
as by his severity to deprive the latter of reason.
The accusation has indeed been proved to be

false, and deserves only to be remembered as an instance added to the one above mentioned, of imputing misanthropy to Mr. Day, that no kind of excellence is exempt from calumny. And both instances suggest an useful caution, that accusations, even when grounded on pretended facts, originating too often in malice or ignorant misconception, and industriously repeated by the narrow-minded and envious multitude, ought never to be regarded, when they are contrary to the tenor of a man's character and conduct, the only true and safe test by which the wise and the candid will judge of others.

(n) *Page 92.*

Some men who are good companions abroad, are more serious at home than their families could at all times wish, as if they exhausted upon strangers their whole stock of good humour. It was otherwise with Mr. Day. To strangers he sometimes appeared rather too grave, whereas

whereas at home, with his familiar friends, he possessed not only an uniform cheerfulness, but also a singular gaiety of temper, which rendered him particularly agreeable to young people and children, whom he was always fond of pleasing and instructing, as his histories of *Sandford and Merton* and of *Little Jack* shew.

(o) Page 92.

Mr. Day's humanity was neither confined to his friends, country, nor his own species. The reflection on the pain to which *brutes* are often subjected by the avarice and wanton cruelty of mankind used to give him uneasiness. He would have willingly abstained from animal food, if his philosophy had not taught him that it was consistent with the intention of nature, and that the practice of rearing and killing animals for food was productive of more happiness than of pain to them ; as the existence of most of them is owing to this practice, and their lives, though shortened, are rendered comfortable

table by the indulgence of their appetites, while no fears of the death to which they are destined disturb their repose.

Mr. Day's singular degree of humanity is the more remarkable, as he himself had never been unfortunate.

(p) *Page 95.*

Mr. Day died without issue, and left by will his widow heiress and executrix, knowing, from the similarity of their dispositions, this to be the most effectual mode of continuing his fortune in the same benevolent channel in which he had kept it.

(q) *Page 99.*

Nature has bestowed more happiness on men, and I believe on all animals, in the earlier than in the later period of their lives, and undoubtedly

edly with the same wisdom with which all things are constituted. *Youth*, besides the advantage of bodies less encumbered with diseases, is occupied principally in the *pursuit of good*, or what is supposed to be *such*, while the employment and care of a more advanced age is generally to *avoid evil*. There are undoubtedly many exceptions to this general rule, and may every aged reader claim his right to the exception! The celebrated philosopher, *Fontenelle*, whose age completed a century, and who had been long harraffed most unjustly and invidiously by powerful enemies, declared that he never had been happy till he had past sixty. The opinion however of the happy fate of those who die in their youth, is very ancient. There is a line of some Greek poet (probably *Euripides*) expressive of this sentiment :

Ὁν γὰρ φιλεῖ Θεὸς γ', ἀποθνήσκει νέος.

He, whom God loves, dies in his youth.

(r) *Page 100.*

In an age of dissipation and vain prodigality, we may easily conceive with what veneration the people in Mr. Day's neighbourhood beheld a gentleman of affluent fortune exercising frugality on himself, and bounty on all around him. If any poor wanted employment, Mr. Day provided it for them. If they were sick, he supplied them with such medicines as he could venture to administer, but he trusted more to the good effects of the food and cordials which his kitchen or his money furnished. If they wanted advice in their affairs, he was their counsellor; in his political writings, he was their protector; and in all cases their friend and benefactor. He conversed much with them in a familiar style adapted to their capacities, and confirmed them in their respective duties. Being at a considerable distance from the parish church, where he resided in Surry, and finding that many of his neighbours were thereby prevented from attending the service on Sundays, he

he used to invite them to his house, where he read prayers to them and to his own family, and strongly recommended to their practice the excellent morality of the Gospel.

(s) Page 105.

Former revolutions in governments have been produced by the prevalence of one *Faction* over its rivals; by the terrors of *Superstition*, or the fury of *Fanaticism*; by the *sudden indignation* of the people roused by some new and striking act of *Oppression*; or by the force of *Foreign Arms*. But the Revolution of France is the sole *triumph of Reason*, having been the effect of the gradual illumination of the human mind over a whole nation, by *Philosophy*, shewing that the true end of Government is the happiness of the *Many*, and dispelling those baneful *prejudices* which established the tyranny of the *Few*, and which were the relics of the ignorance of barbarous ages. In order therefore to revile this

great event, the pride of the history of mankind, the author of a celebrated pamphlet, entitled *Reflections on the French Revolution*, has been obliged, with all the fascinating arts of laboured oratory, to contradict the maxims the most generally avowed; to recall from the dark cells into which philosophy had driven them, the exploded superstitions and rude notions of uncultivated times; to defend every prejudice, however absurd, because it is ancient; and to sanctify every religious and political institution, because it is established. In vain for him has *Bacon* taught us how to extend human knowledge to its utmost bounds, or *Newton* almost to surpass these bounds. These and others such who have advanced the human mind, are to him but so many malignant magicians, who have broken the spell of his enchanted castle of *Chivalry*, *Gothic ignorance*, and *Gothic tyranny*. But although he derides the *rights of men*, save those only which accident has left from the ravage of the great and little tyrants of former times, yet these rights are too sacred, and remain too firmly fixed on the unalterable

basis

basis of justice and humanity, ever to be shook by the eloquence of any one,

Qui licet eloquio fidum quoque Nestora vincat.

And although some sceptered, crossiered, and interested hands should strive to crown this champion of establishments, their laurels will wither as soon as they are exposed to the effulgence of truth. If the author wrote his *Reflections on the French Revolution*, as many suppose, with a view to warn his countrymen from following the example, and to prop our own establishments; the true friends of their country, confident in the goodness of their cause, may perhaps dislike his mode of defence by reviving exploded prejudices, and may say,

Non tali auxilio, non defensoribus istis

Tempus eget.

Happily the same necessity does not exist in this country. For although our government may not be the best possible, it is certainly too good to risk any public convulsion, in hopes of
a bet-

a better, or to attempt any other change, than such as may naturally follow from the progressive advancement and extension of knowledge among the people, by which our constitution may be rather restored to its true principles, which are excellent, and farther improved and adapted to the cultivated genius of the age, than altered or overturned. By such means the liberal and wise policy of a free and enlightened nation may preserve its constitution with more efficacy and security, than by vain attempts to blindfold the people, to maintain absurd opinions because they are antient, or to oppose, with an ill-timed and dangerous obstinacy, the irresistible operation of the spirit of the age.

While therefore this distinguished orator pleases himself with “ cherishing prejudices, because they are prejudices ;” or with deploring the extinction of “ chivalry,” of his “ proud submission,” and “ dignified obedience ;” let no friend of humanity and liberty withhold his applause from an event which emancipates millions : or from those professed principles on
which

which it has been effected, the *Declaration of Rights by the National Assembly of France*, which must ever serve as a law and a precedent to nations oppressed by their governors,

And although I am not inclined to venture beyond my information, as some perhaps have done, in pretending to estimate the degree of wisdom which has been shewn by the National Assembly in the measures adopted for putting their declaration of rights into execution; yet as that assembly has the general concurrence of the people, I trust that these first measures, however harsh they may seem against individuals, were not only expedient but necessary for the acquisition of general liberty: for it can hardly be deemed probable that any effective and beneficial change could have been produced, if the previous consent of the aristocracy and the hierarchy had been requisite. But although the essential preliminaries to the firm establishment of a free constitution have been accomplished, much yet remains to be done towards its final completion; and for this purpose, time and security

rity are requisite. Whatever judgement then we can form at present may be premature. Perhaps the apparently too democratic spirit of the present system may be hereafter qualified by the institution of a senate or permanent magistracy, similar in its effects to our House of Peers, to whom such privileges may be granted as shall be necessary for their independence, not as nobles, but as a body forming an essential part of the state; who, by poising the powers of the crown and of the people, and by forming a barrier between the executive and legislative authorities, may keep these distinct, and give to the whole government, the stability and dignity becoming a great empire: or, perhaps other qualifications may be found adapted to the times; for nothing can be more pedantic, than the idea which seems often prevalent among men merely official or professional, who are habituated to judge from precedents rather than from principles, that all possible forms of government are reducible to those which their own experience and knowledge have hitherto made them acquainted with, not conceiving that political institutions, like
every

every thing human, must vary, and be suited to the spirit of every nation, and of every age.

A D D I T I O N A L N O T E .

Upon inquiring from Mr. Young, to whom Mr. Day addressed his pamphlet on the Wool Bill, whether the effects of that bill, when passed into a law, have been such as had been apprehended, that gentleman, who is alike distinguished for his extensive knowledge on such subjects, and for his active zeal in promoting the interest of the country, has been so obliging as to give me the information requested, in a letter, of which the following passage is an extract.

“ In regard to the Wool Bill, the landed interest feels, as far as price is concerned, the effects that were foretold. In no part of the kingdom is the rise in the price of wool for the two years past of any consequence, and in many parts it is quite trifling; in some, none has taken place.

Yet

Yet the manufacture has flourished very uncommonly, as appears by authentic registers, as well as by more general information. While the fabric is so prosperous, the raw material ought in common policy to participate in the national advantage; but this is not the case, owing to the monopoly which the manufacturer enjoys at the direct expence of the farmer, and which I have shewn on a former occasion to amount to the enormous sum of four millions a year, being twice the burthen of the land tax. The great declension of the French fabrics, owing to the state of their affairs, has probably been one reason for the advance of the English woollens. We have surely reason to complain that we do not partake of the advantage that is made by the working up of our wool."

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was

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was confined by the Gout, and expostulated very warmly with me upon this subject." See page 2.

Subject of Plate III.—Robinson Crusoe Shipwrecked and clinging to a Rock.—“ I recovered a little before there turn of the Wave ; and seeing I should be covered again with the Water, I resolved to hold fast by the piece of the Rock.” See page 56.

Subject of Plate IV.—Robinson Crusoe upon his Raft.—“ Having plundered the Ship of what was portable and fit to hand out, I began with the Cables ; and cutting the great Cable in pieces, such as I could move, I got two Cables and a Hawser on Shore, with all the Iron-work could get ; and having cut down the Sprit-sail-yard, and the Mizen-yard, and every thing I could to make a large Raft, I loaded it with all the heavy Goods, and came away,” See page 69.

Plate V.—Robinson Crusoe at work in his Cave.—“ I made abundance of Things even without Tools, and some with no more Tools than an Adze and a Hatchet, which, perhaps, were never made before, and that with infinite Labour.” See Page 84.

Plate VI.—Robinson Crusoe discovers the Print of a Man's Foot.—“ I was exceedingly surprised with the Print of a Man's naked Foot on the Shore, which was very plain to be seen in the Sand. I stood like one thunderstruck, or as if I had seen an Apparition ; I listened, I looked round me, I could hear nothing, nor see any thing.” See Page 194.

Plate VII.—Robinson Crusoe first sees and rescues his Man Friday.—“ Having knocked this Fellow down, the other who pursued him stopped, as if he had been frightened ; and I advanced apace towards him ; but as I came nearer, I perceived presently he had a Bow and Arrow, and was fitting it to shoot at me ; so I was then necessitated to shoot at him first, which I did, and killed him at the first Shot.” See Page 256.

Plate VIII.—Robinson Crusoe and Friday making a Boat.—“ I shewed him how to cut it out with Tools, which, after I had shewed him how to use, he did very readily ; and in about a Month's hard Labour we finished it, and made it very handsome.” See Page 287.

Plate IX.—Robinson Crusoe and Friday making a Tent to lodge Friday's Father and the Spaiiard.—“ Friday and

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and I carried them up both together between us; but, when we got to the outside of our Wall or Fortification, we were at a worse Loss than before, for it was impossible to get them over: and I was resolved not to break it down, so I set to work again, and Friday and I, in about two Hours Time, made a very handsome Tent, covered with old Sails, and above that with Boughs of Trees." See Page 304.

Plate X.—Title to Vol. II. with a beautiful Vignette, composed of Robinson Crusoe's Implements of Husbandry.

Plate XI.—Frontispiece.—Robinson Crusoe's first Interview with the Spaniards on his second Landing.—“First he turned to me, and pointing to them said, These, Sir, are some of the Gentlemen who owe their Lives to you; and then turning to them, and pointing to me, he let them know who I was; upon which they all came up one by one, not as if they had been Sailors, and ordinary Fellows, and I the like, but really as if they had been Ambassadors or Noblemen, and I a Monarch or a great Conqueror.” See Page 42.

Plate XII.—The Plantation of the Two Englishmen.—“The two Men had innumerable young Trees planted about their Hut, that when you came to the Place nothing was to be seen but a Wood; and though they had the Plantation twice demolished, once by their own Countrymen, and once by the Enemy, as shall be shewn in its Place; yet they had restored all again, and every Thing was flourishing and thriving about them.” See Page 90.

Plate XIII.—The two Englishmen retreating with their Wives and Children.—“Now, having great Reason to believe that they were betrayed, the first Thing they did was to bind the Slaves which were left, and cause two of the three Men, whom they brought with the Women, who, it seems, proved very faithful to them, to lead them with their two Wives, and whatever they could carry away with them, to their retired Place in the Woods. See Page 96.

Plate XIV.—The Spaniards and Englishmen burning the Indian Boats.—“They went to work immediately with the Boats; and getting some dry Wood together from a dead Tree, they tried to set some of them on fire, but they were so wet that they would scarce burn; however,

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ever, the Fire so burned the upper Part, that it soon made them unfit for swimming in the Sea as Boats. See Page 113.

Plate XV.—Robinson Crusoe distributing Tools of Husbandry among the Inhabitants.—“ I brought them out all my Store of Tools, and gave every Man a digging Spade, a Shovel, and a Rake, for we had no Harrows or Ploughs; and to every separate Place a Pick-axe, a Crow, and a broad Axe, and a Saw.” See Page 134.

Plate XVI.—A View of the Plantation of the three Englishmen.—“ Upon this he faced about just before me, as he walked along, and putting me to a full Stop, made me a very low Bow; I most heartily thank God and you, Sir, says he, for giving me so evident a Call to so blessed a Work.” See Page 151.

Plate XVII.—Head of De Foe to face the Title of the Life.

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